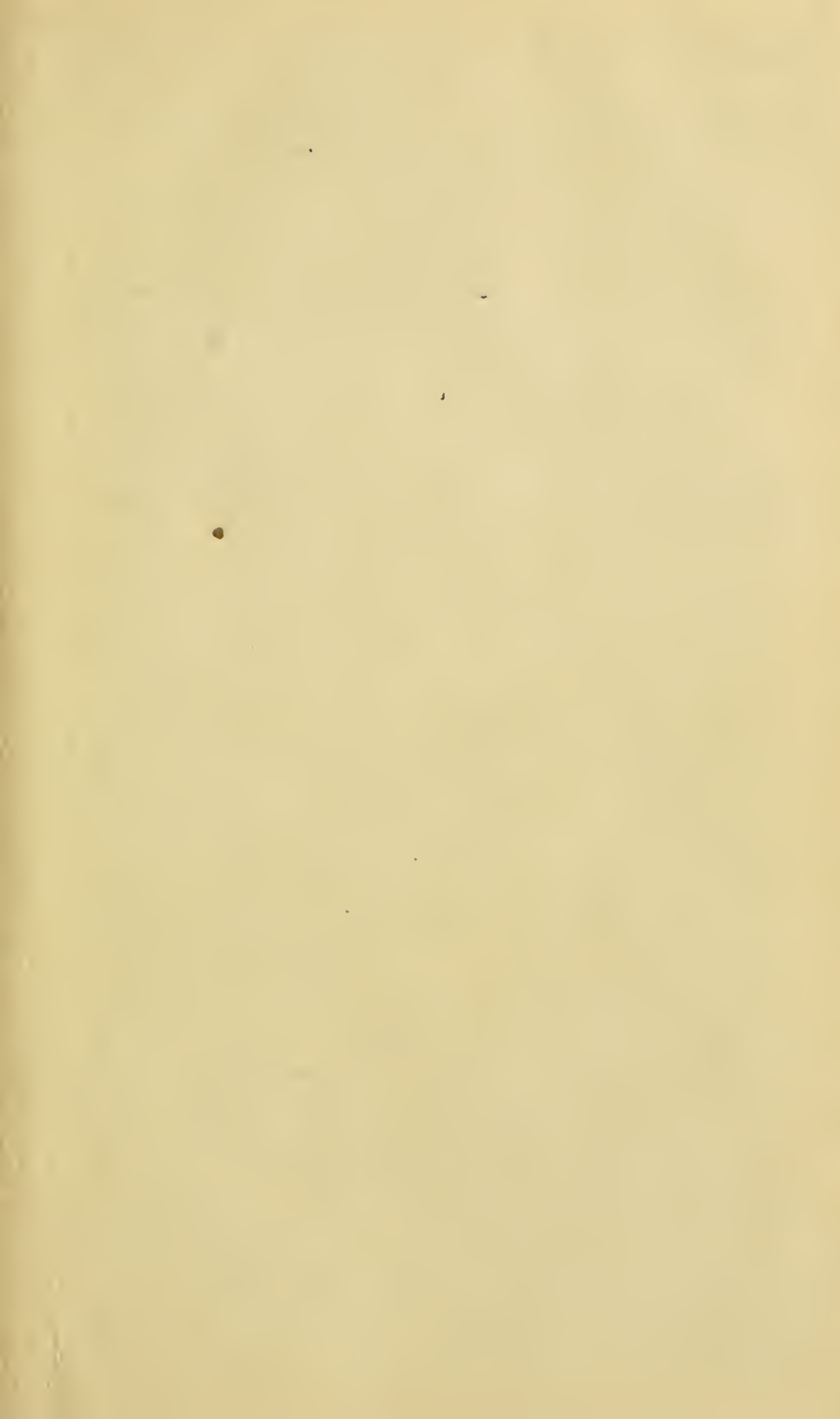


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PURCHASED FROM



THE KATYN FOREST MASSACRE

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS, EVIDENCE,
AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE
KATYN FOREST MASSACRE

EIGHTY-SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

INVESTIGATION OF THE MURDER OF THOUSANDS OF
POLISH OFFICERS IN THE KATYN FOREST
NEAR SMOLENSK, RUSSIA

PART 6

(EXHIBITS 32 AND 33 PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE
IN LONDON BY THE POLISH GOVERNMENT
IN EXILE)

Printed for the use of the Select Committee To Conduct an Investigation
of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre



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SELECT COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
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THE KATYN FOREST MASSACRE

(COMMITTEE'S NOTE.—Material contained in this part of the Katyn Forest Massacre Committee's record of hearings consists of facts and documents compiled by the Polish Government in Exile in London as its "white paper" on the Katyn massacre. This material was introduced as exhibits 32 and 33 during this committee's hearings held in London. Because of the volume of material contained in the two exhibits, they are being published under separate cover. The first part of exhibit 32 consists of a condensed version of the main Polish report likewise referred to as exhibit 32. Exhibit 33 consists of supplemental material compiled by the Polish Government in Exile in London since the main report was written.)

EXHIBIT 32

THE MASS MURDER OF POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN KATYN

FOREWORD

The short report below is based on a comprehensive study entitled "Facts and Documents concerning Polish Prisoners of War captured by the U. S. S. R. in the 1939 Campaign." The comprehensive report immediately follows this condensed version.

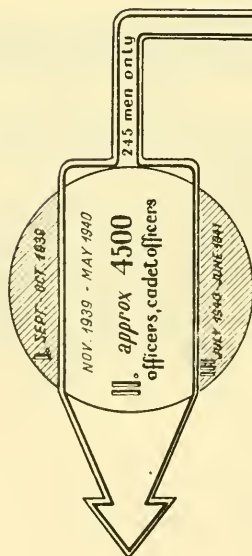
When on the 17th September 1939 Soviet troops entered Poland, they advanced rapidly and captured numerous prisoners of war. According to the *Krasnaya Zvezda*, published on 17th September 1940, the total figure of the Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. was estimated at about 250,000.

These prisoners were grouped in some hundred odd camps in Poland's eastern territories and in the western provinces of the Soviet Union. Three of these camps, those in Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov, respectively (see map facing this page) were transformed at the end of October 1939 into special camps for officers, by the removal from them of all noncommissioned ranks and their replacement by officers in the camps at Kozielsk and Starobielsk, and by police, gendarmerie, and Military Frontier Guards in the camp at Ostashkov.

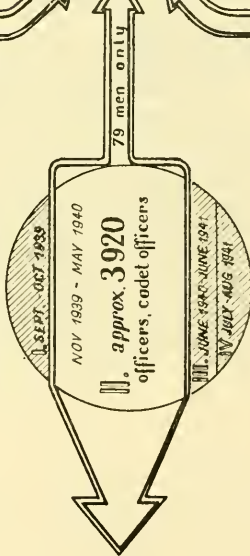
**MAIN CAMPS OF POLISH P. O. W. AND INTERNEES
IN U. S. S. R. 1939 - 1941**

(see Chapters II-VI p.24-151)

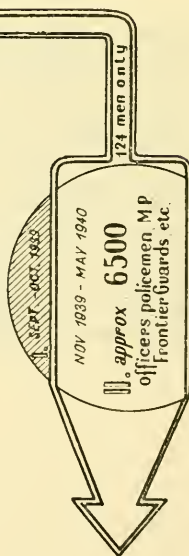
KOZIELSK



STAROBIELSK



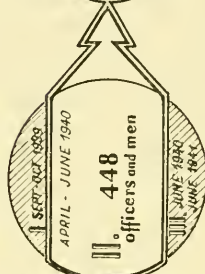
OSTASZKOW



GRIAZOWIEC



PAWLISZCZEW BOR



LEGEND :

□ - P.O.W. (officers, police, mil. police, front guards)
 ▨ - in 97% vanished
 ○ - Other camps

KATYN
near SZOJENSK

4443
discovered
bodies

CHARKOW ?

?

WIAZMA ?

?



The population of these camps amounted approximately to—

Kozielsk.....	4, 500
Starobielsk.....	4, 000
Ostashkov.....	6, 500

Total approxi..... 15, 000

These camps survived in the form mentioned above until April 1940, when they were liquidated by the deportation during April and the beginning of May of their inmates in an unknown direction.

These camps are marked on the enclosed diagram as Kozielsk II, Starobielsk II, and Ostashkov II in order to differentiate them from camps which were situated in the same places both before and after that time.

Out of each of these three camps small groups, totaling some 448 persons, were transferred to the camp at Pavelishtchev Bor and subsequently to the camp at Gрязovetz near Vologda, which, in August 1941, following the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of 30th July 1941, was taken over by the Command of the Polish Armed forces in the U. S. S. R.

The remainder of the prisoners of war, i. e., approximately 4,500 persons, were never found. The repeated inquiries made by the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. elicited from Soviet liaison officers in 1941 the reply that many Polish prisoners of war had been sent back to Poland in 1940.

Since, however, after the checking up of this statement by the Polish Underground Organisation in Poland it transpired that none of the prisoners of war deported in April and May 1940 from Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov had returned to Poland, and, moreover, that since the moment of their deportation from these camps not one of them had given any sign of life, although, up to April 1940, they had corresponded with their families, their fate began to give rise to an ever growing anxiety. For a long time Polish authorities concluded that these prisoners had been deported to the heavy labour camps in the Far North and that the Soviet authorities were unwilling to release them, or, possibly, that difficulties due to climatic conditions had retarded their release. Diplomatic intervention, therefore, which aimed at the securing, or possibly, the hastening of their release were initiated. These interventions which were carried on from October 1941 until July 1942 yielded no results. Polish-Soviet conversations on the subjects were interrupted until 13th April 1943, when the German radio broadcast the news of the discovery of graves in Katyn near Smolensk containing the bodies of thousands of murdered Polish officers and accused the Soviet authorities of the crime.

On the 15th April 1943 the Soviet Information Bureau published a communiqué containing a counter-accusation levelled at the German authorities.

On 17th April 1943 there was published the communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defense announcing that the Polish Government would approach the International Red Cross with a request to investigate the matter.

In reply to this communiqué the Soviet radio and press accused "pro-Hitlerite elements" in the Polish Government in London of collaborating with the Germans and the Soviet Government of 26th April 1943 broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government.

Owing to the Soviet Government's refusal to give its consent, the International Red Cross considered that it could not despatch an Investigation Commission, and the Germans, therefore, published their own report on the matter at the end of August 1943, entitled "Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn." This was supported by the report drawn up by the "European Medical Commission" composed of eminent experts.

In the Autumn of 1943 the German army was driven out of the district of Smolensk and in January 1944 the "Soviet Special Commission" published its report under the title: "Truth about Katyn" which ascribed the Katyn crime to the German authorities; the latter, in the opinion of the Soviet report, had committed it and subsequently staged its "discovery" with a view to accusing the Soviet authorities of it.

After the defeat of Germany the accusation concerning the Katyn crime was included in the indictment against the chief war criminals, and in February 1946 it was repeated in the speech made by Rudenko, the Soviet Prosecutor.

We are, therefore, at the moment, witnessing a case unprecedented in the judicial history of the civilised world, namely, a case of one party, accused of committing a crime, accusing and judging another party of the same crime, without having cleared itself from a similar accusation before an impartial tribunal.

The study of the Katyn mass murder is not a search for entirely unknown criminals. The most objective judge or observer is by no means in the position of a detective who knows nothing and begins by suspecting everyone. Such a mass murder could only be carried out by a great organisation with all the means at its disposal, which, in one way or another got several thousand victims into its power—in one word—a state organisation. For this reason an objective judge, confronted with the Katyn mass murder, is in a dilemma. There are only two possibilities in considering this mystery: either the murder was the work of German authorities, and in that event it is necessary to regard the report of the Soviet Special Commission as fundamentally true, or it was committed by Soviet authorities, and in that case the truth—if only partial—is contained in the German report Amtliches Material.

Let us compare these two documents and the explanations they put forward respecting the Katyn murder, and in doing so present the whole problem under several heads, which we shall introduce with a few short comments.

A. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The Katyn murder is a typical example of a case, based on circumstantial evidence, since not one of the victims of the mass murder has escaped, the perpetrator has not confessed to his crime, and, finally, there are no direct witnesses of it.

The only indirect witnesses are those who are quoted in the Soviet report. With regard to them the following reservations should be made:

1. for the most part they are the same witnesses who had made entirely contrary depositions before the Germans and before members of the "European Medical Commission" as well as before the representatives of the press of various European countries.

2. all witnesses called by the Soviet Commission were at the disposal of the Soviet authorities, which, in this affair, were—and still are—both the prosecutor and the accused party; this gives rise, to say the least, to the possibility of influencing the statements of the witnesses, especially as no outsider of any sort took part in the investigation.

For this very reason, as we have no possibility of interrogating the witnesses in conditions which exclude the possibility of pressure, we must rely chiefly on the factual proofs which are at our disposal and on the analysis of the circumstances in which the crime was carried out.

B. THE FACT OF MURDER—WHO WAS MURDERED?

1. *Number of Victims*

According to the testimony of the German authorities, which is confirmed by the testimony of the non-German journalists and the statement of the members of the Technical Team of the Polish Red Cross—the number of the victims exhumed in the Katyn graves was not less than 4,143; seventy percent of them were identified in the lists attached to the A. M. The number of the victims was also estimated—in a report by Polish Underground Authorities which was despatched by wireless to London at the end of April 1943 at approximately 4,000. We may, therefore, accept the figure suggested by the A. M., i. e., 4,143 as the lowest number of the victims. This lowest limit has not been queried by either of the parties.

In Chapter XX of the main report it was demonstrated that the seven Katyn graves, discovered by the Germans, could not have contained a larger number of bodies and that after their exhumation these graves were completely empty. This opinion is confirmed by photographs taken by the Germans (see photograph facing this page). The fact that the exhumation of 4,143 bodies had emptied the contents of the 7 graves found in Katyn forced the Germans to publish a communiqué of the 3rd June 1943, announcing the "interruption" of the exhumation work during the summer heat wave; this was done to save their face, as German propaganda had previously claimed that the Katyn graves contained ten, eleven, nay—twelve thousand victims of the "Bolshevik terrorism."

To the figure of 4,143 bodies exhumed from the seven graves should be added the bodies lying in the eighth grave which was the last to be discovered. The dimensions of this grave as given by the A. M. are 5.5 x 2.5 m. The A. M. maintains at the same time that this grave "stretched further," though it does not specify how far. The inconsistency and complete contradiction of both these statements are so obvious that one can assume without any doubt that the last German statement to the effect that the stated dimensions of this grave "stretched further" was simply a means—so to speak—of backing up German propaganda in the same way as the communiqué respecting the "interruption" of the exhumations.

In that event, however, i. e., assuming the dimensions of this grave to be as submitted by the A. M. and applying the average figures on the basis of which the contents of the first seven graves were calculated, we may estimate the probable number of bodies contained in the eighth grave. This figure amounts to approximately 110 bodies. By adding this figure to the 4,143 total of the other seven graves, we obtain the probable total of the victims buried in the eight Katyn graves—i. e., 4,253.

2. *Who were the murdered victims?*

On the basis of diaries, correspondence, and small personal possessions such as wooden cigarette cases and holders with the inscription "Kozielsk 1940" there is no doubt that the bodies of the men in the Katyn graves are those of officers, prisoners of war, who had previously been detained in the camp at Kozielsk and who were deported thence between 1st April and 11th May 1940.

Of 4,143 bodies exhumed, 2,914 were identified. As it happens about 80% of these names are found in the list of the "missing" officers, comprising 3,845 names, which was handed by General Sikorski to Stalin on 3rd December 1941, or in the later additional lists, drawn up by the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. during 1941 and 1942.

From the number of 2,914 identified names, 2,821 in the above-mentioned list are annotated "Kozielsk"—the remainder, i. e., 93 names are annotated either "Starobielsk" (84 names) or "Ostashkov" (9 names). This is explained by the fact that—

1. the lists of the "missing" prisoners of war were drawn up from memory, hence mistakes were likely to arise as to the presumed placing of a prisoner in one of the three camps;

2. it is known that early in the spring 1940 there had been cases of the transfer of individuals or of small groups of prisoners from one camp to another.

The fact, therefore, that a name on the lists of the "missing" officers may be annotated "Starobielsk" or "Ostashkov" does not, in the first place, preclude a mistake, or in the second place, the possibility that the particular officer who had at first been detained in Starobielsk, had subsequently, early in 1940, been transferred to the camp at Kozielsk, eventually to meet the same fate.

As stated above, the camp at Kozielsk numbered at the beginning of 1940, approximately 4,500 prisoners of war. From the initial number of about 5,000, several hundred other ranks and cadet officers must be deducted, most of whom were released. From the figure of 4,500, 245 persons were deported to Pavlishtchev Bor and subsequently to Gruzovetz and approximately 4,250 were deported by convoys which discharged their load at Gnezdovo. This last figure agrees almost exactly with the probable total of bodies found in the eight Katyn graves.

Thus, both by comparing the name lists of the bodies identified in Katyn and the total number of bodies of the murdered with the total of the "missing" inmates of the Kozielsk camp—we arrive at the conclusion that the murdered buried in the Katyn graves are completely identical with the "missing" prisoners of war from Kozielsk.

Attention should here be drawn to one more significant individual case. In the Kozielsk camp there had at first been six women. When this camp was transformed, in November 1939, into an officers' camp, only one woman, a flight lieutenant, was left. It is significant that while the group of journalists visiting Katyn in April 1943 were informed that the body of one woman had been found in addition to the officers' bodies in the excavated graves, the A. M. makes no mention of it. Evidently the Germans, who knew nothing about the sojourn in the Kozielsk camp of the one woman, kept this fact silent in their report, thinking that the finding of a woman's body would tend to invalidate their case that in Katyn were buried the murdered inmates of the officers' camps. From our point of view, however, this fact only strengthens the thesis that it was the Kozielsk officers' camp that was liquidated in Katyn.

Finally, one more circumstance should be mentioned here, even though it is negative in character. On the bodies in Katyn were found many personal articles of sentimental value, such as wooden cigarette cases with an inscription "Kozielsk 1940," a number of diaries and newspapers which are all dated from Kozielsk. It is known that the prisoners of war in Starobielsk and Ostashkov also passed their time making personal keepsakes and that there too, many of them kept diaries and newspapers. If, however, prisoners from Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been buried in the Katyn graves it is impossible, in view of the fact that the number of victims involved is a matter of several thousand, that there should not have been found in Katyn at least a few of these sentimental keepsakes dated from Starobielsk or Ostashkov.

As soon as we have established this thesis, however, the question arises as to the fate of the prisoners from the Starobielsk and Ostashkov camps. They have not been found in Katyn, and yet not one of them has returned or given a sign of life. Even if it were assumed that the Germans, who are alleged to have staged a massacre there, are responsible for the death of 4,250 prisoners of war buried in Katyn, the question arises as to who is responsible for the disappearance of the 3,900 prisoners of war from Starobielsk and the 6,500 from Ostashkov.

The history of these three camps shows an amazing similarity: they were formed at the same time, the same regime was introduced in them, their liquidation was started and completed exactly at the same time, in April and May 1940. Again, all three camps were liquidated in the same manner. In all three camps the prisoners were given the same explanation for the liquidation of the camps, the convoys in each were formed in the same manner and were of the same size, they were deported in the same way in prison trucks, and they were again detained at certain stations, following which all trace of them is suddenly lost. The prisoners from Kozielsk were detained at the station of Gnezdovo and were loaded onto lorries; the prisoners from Starobielsk were detained at the station of Kharkov

and loaded onto lorries, and the prisoners from Ostashkov were brought by train to the station of Viazma, after which all trace of them is lost.

If the prisoners from Kozielsk have been found in the Katyn wood, several kilometres distant from the Gnezdovo station, and if—as we have shown—there are no bodies of prisoners from Starobielsk and Ostashkov in the Katyn graves, then, bearing in mind the analogies emphasized above, every thoughtful person must needs ask the inevitable question whether perhaps the analogies do not go even further. Whether just as the bodies of the Kozielsk prisoners were found not far from the Gnezdovo station, the bodies of the prisoners from Starobielsk should not be looked for in the vicinity of Kharkov, and those from Ostashkov in the vicinity of Viazma?

The Katyn murderers could not execute on the spot those who were not there. So that even if we accept the Soviet thesis and if we hold the Germans responsible for the Katyn victims, the number of these bodies is far too small to allow us to regard the problem of all the prisoners “missing” from the three large camps as fully solved.

In spite of the Katyn discovery, prisoners from Starobielsk (under 3,900 persons) and from Ostashkov (approx. 6,500 persons) are still missing. The Soviet authorities have neither returned these people nor supplied any information about them, nor have they produced their bodies when they exhumed the Katyn graves in January 1944.

C. METHOD OF MURDER

1. *Manner of execution*

Without exception all the victims whose bodies were found in the Katyn graves were shot in the back of the head. It is generally known that this is the typical method of carrying out the death penalty universally, almost “officially” accepted in the Soviet Union. Moreover, as far as the Katyn wood is concerned the bodies of Russian civilians, murdered during the Russian revolution of 1917 and contained in graves discovered not far from the graves of the Polish prisoners of war, all bear witness to the same method of execution.

As far as the Germans are concerned, it is known that in their mass murders which killed millions of victims, they never used this method of execution, employing rather gas chambers, or lethal injections or machine-gun shootings.

2. *Tying up the victims*

About five percent of the bodies in the Katyn graves had their hands tied behind their backs with a rope, some had their heads wrapped up in their overcoats. These were evidently victims who probably shouted or resisted at the moment of execution. The method of the tying up was described by the German report as “technically perfect”. An identical method of tying up was discovered on the bodies of Russian civilians found in the nearby graves. The executioners used a strong uncoloured rope for the purpose, which had been evidently prepared beforehand as it was cut in identical lengths.

Polish Underground Authorities in Poland appropriated several such cords which had been secretly taken away from Katyn, together with a few diaries found on the bodies of the victims. These cords were examined in detail and experts stated with complete certainty that they were of Russian make. Persons who are in a position to make formal statements in the matter are at present in Great Britain.

3. *Ammunition*

The German report states that for the execution ammunition of German origin, from the Gustav Genschow and Co. firm Burlach bei Karlsruhe (trade-mark GECO) was used. In grave No. 2 one unused bullet of this make was found and, on examination, it was established that this ammunition was dated 1922–1931. It is well known that ammunition of this make was exported in large quantities to Poland, the Baltic States, and to Russia. The Soviet report does not use this point as evidence against the Germans.

4. *Other wounds on the bodies of the murdered*

In addition to pistol shots in the back of the head, which without any exception were the cause of the death of all the victims, medical examination and dissection showed that a few bodies had the jaws smashed by blows or had received bayonet wounds. Most of these, evidently, were victims who put up a fight or shouted during the execution. A close examination of the flesh wounds showed that they had been inflicted by the four-edged bayonets, such as are used by the Soviet Army exclusively; all other armies use bayonets shaped like flat knives.

An attempt might be made to explain both the shots in the back of the head and the use of a cord of Russian make as well as of the Russian bayonet by accepting the Russian thesis of a German "provocation." But in that case we come up against further difficulties:

a. according to the Soviet report, the Germans were held to have murdered prisoners of war in Katyn in August and September 1941, while the idea of representing it in a provocative manner as a massacre by the Russians is supposed to have arisen as late as 1942. In this case it is incomprehensible that the details of the provocation should have been prepared a whole year before the idea of it was evolved at all.

b. If the Germans used the Russian bayonet, the Russian cord, and the Russian method of execution in order to accuse the Russians of the massacre, why did they not use Russian ammunition, of which they had plenty? None of these difficulties or contradictions arise, if we assume that the murder was carried out by the Soviet authorities.

5. *The organisation of the Katyn murder*

When making an analysis of the Katyn murder it is impossible to limit oneself to an analysis of the method of execution of single victims. There must have been a plan and an organisation established in order to carry out the massacre of more than four thousand prisoners of war.

Let us compare how this fact is presented in the German and the Soviet reports.

Both reports agree in stating that in April and May 1940 convoys with Polish prisoners of war arrived at the Gnezdovo station; the agreement between the two reports, however, ends here.

According to the German report, officers were taken by lorries from the Gnezdovo station to the Katyn wood. According to the deposition of a witness in the possession of Polish authorities, officers were taken by one prison bus, which carried about 30 prisoners at a time, and after half an hour came back for the next consignment.

This statement fits in quite well as far as time is concerned, if we consider that the distance from the Gnezdovo station was about two miles. After arriving in the wood, the group was murdered at once, while the bus went back to fetch the next lot of victims. Such a system prevented any possibility of resistance and rendered the most desperate, spontaneous resistance hopeless, because the number of the people at the place of execution never exceeded about 30 persons. This method at the same time forced the executioners to make considerable haste: they had to murder one group and lay the bodies in the grave during the short interval before the arrival of the next group.

According to the Soviet report, the prisoners, after being loaded onto lorries at the Gnezdovo station, were taken to three special camps. Here at once we come up against a difficulty. These camps are supposed to have been situated west of Smolensk at a distance of some 25-40 kilometres. The station of Gnezdovo lies 13 kilometres west of Smolensk. The route taken by the car was from 12-32 km., i. e., the round trip amounted to 24-64 km., i. e., a distance which the prison lorry could not cover in half an hour in order to fetch the next group. Moreover, railway stations along the line on which Gnezdovo lies are spaced at fairly frequent intervals and it is incomprehensible why prisoners of war should have been detained at the Gnezdovo station in order to be conveyed 12-32 km. by car, when they could have been detained two or three stations further up the line and there transferred onto lorries, thus considerably shortening the car route.

Let us, however, drop this point and consider another more striking fact.

After the transfer of the Polish prisoners of war to three special camps, Nos. 1 ON, No. 2 ON, and No. 3 ON—as they are referred to in the Soviet report—the Polish officers were alleged to have stayed in them, working on road constructions, until August and September 1941, i. e., for about 16 months. In this case it appears completely incomprehensible why officers who travelled together in convoys should be lying next to one another in the Katyn graves.¹

It is quite unthinkable that men who purely by accident happened to travel by the same waggons in April 1940 should subsequently have remained together for sixteen months in spite of the fact that they had been divided into three camps and in these camps into small groups of 15-20 men, working—according

¹ Both from the statement of those prisoners who were transferred from Kozielsk to Gniazovet and from diaries found in Katyn, the names were known of a number of officers who were deported together in the various convoys. These officers figure in the lists of the identified bodies appended to the A. M. as lying in the graves under consecutive or very close file numbers—a fact which goes to prove that their bodies were placed very close together in the Katyn graves.

to the statements of Russian witnesses—on road constructions. Is it possible that these groups, thrown together in 1940, should have lasted for sixteen months and survived the chaos which must have reigned in the camps at the time when the Germans captured them? In the face of this difficulty the Soviet thesis cannot be accepted by any logical mind. But this problem, too, is immediately solved if we accept the belief that the murder was committed by the Soviet authorities.

D. TIME OF MURDER

We stated at the beginning of this report that in studying the Katyn murder we are faced not by many but only by two possible solutions.

The same may be said with regard to the question of the time when the murder was committed. The massacre can only have been carried out on two dates, i. e., either in April–May 1940, as suggested by the German report, and in that case the crime was carried out by the Soviet authorities, or in August–September 1941, as suggested by the Soviet report, and in that case it could have been carried out only by the German authorities.

Let us consider which of these two dates will bear the light of the available evidence—evidence which can be divided into positive and negative.

1. *Positive evidence*

a. The so-called "European Medical Commission" invited at the end of April 1943 by the German authorities established that the bodies in the Katyn graves had been buried for at least three years. This opinion was expressed in the report of Dr. Buhtz, professor of criminology in Breslau University, who directed the exhumations in Katyn on behalf of the German authorities. Obviously the German authorities cannot be regarded as disinterested or impartial, and both the statements made by Buhtz and those of the "European Medical Commission," organised and selected by the Germans, must be approached in a spirit of scepticism. On the other hand, however, it is impossible to pass over both these statements in silence. The composition of the "European Medical Commission" and its members and possibly Professor Buhtz, who is best acquainted with the matter, may be summoned again without any difficulty and again interrogated. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the opinion of the legal-medical experts is not the only evidence in support of 1940 as the date of the murder. Finally, it should be emphasized that these experts themselves fully realized that it is impossible to accurately establish the age of a corpse and consequently the date of the murder, and they, therefore, also took into consideration other data.

b. The "European Medical Commission" quotes in its protocol the opinion of an expert, forester v. Herff, who examined the spruce firs which were planted on the graves. Microscopic examination has proved beyond all doubt that they were five years old, transplanted on to the graves three years previously, i. e., in the spring of 1940. It should be mentioned that the graves containing the bodies of Russian civilians executed during the Russian Revolution of 1917 had been planted in an identical fashion and the age of the trees corresponds approximately to the date of burial.

c. Further proof was supplied by Grave No. 5. This grave lay lower than the others and nearest to the boggy ground so that after it was excavated underground water welled up in it. As it is impossible that this grave could have been excavated in the warm season, when the subcutaneous water is high, it becomes logically conclusive that it was dug in winter or very early spring at the latest, when the water was low as it is in April. It is known from other sources that April 1940 was a cold month and the weather wintry at the time.

d. The opinion that the graves were dug and filled in in a cold season is also borne out by the fact that no insects or any traces of insects were found on the bodies, a fact emphasized in the report by the "European Medical Commission."

e. A detailed description has been given of the eight Katyn graves and their contents in our main report. Here we need only recall that the seven Katyn graves containing 4,143 bodies, were lying close together on one group, while the eighth grave, containing about 110 bodies, lay separately at a distance of 100 metres.

According to the description contained in the German report the bodies in graves Nos. 1–7 were dressed in overcoats, fur coats, sweaters, warm underclothing, and mufflers. This report is also confirmed in White's "Report on the Russians," chapter VII. White says that the foreign correspondents invited by Soviet authorities to Katyn in January 1944, when the second exhumation took place, noticed this important fact and expressed their astonishment that

officers who, in accordance with Soviet statements, were supposed to have been murdered by the Germans in August, should be dressed in winter clothing. The questions of the foreign correspondents created great confusion among the Russians present, who after a short consultation, said that in these parts the weather in August is so variable that people wear winter clothing. This statement is entirely false and quite fantastic in the opinion of those who know the climate of these regions. As shown on the enclosed isotherm map, the average August temperature in the environs of Smolensk is 65 Fahrenheit, i. e., the same as on the southern shores of the Channel where at that time of year the bathing season is at its height.

But the weather is quite different in April. The second isotherm map shows clearly that the average April temperature in the vicinity of Smolensk is 40 degrees Fahrenheit, i. e., it is similar to that of the Faroe Islands. The wearing of winter clothing in that temperature, especially when traveling, is quite natural.

Moreover, both the statements of prisoners of war from Kozielsk, who were deported on 26th April, to Pavlishtchev Bor, and the diaries found on bodies confirm that the weather at that time was wintry and that it was snowing.

There was an interval in the arrival of the convoys from Kozielsk between 29th April and 9th May. It was not till the 10th and 11th May that two convoys, totalling approximately 100 persons, were again despatched. These persons were never seen again and all appearances seem to indicate that their bodies have been buried in the eighth Katyn grave which is separate from the first seven. This theory is supported not only by the fact that the number of officers of both May convoys corresponds to the number of the bodies in the eighth grave, and by the fact that on these bodies newspapers have been found dated from the first days of May 1940, but also by yet another important circumstance.

In describing the eighth grave the German report records that the bodies in this grave were dressed differently from those in the remaining graves. They have neither overcoats nor sweaters nor warm underclothes. The German report which did not possess the necessary information offers no explanation of this fact. Yet the matter is very simple. After the convoys left on the 10th May, approximately 100 officers were left in Kozielsk, of whom 95 were transferred on 12th May to the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor and thence to Gruzovetz. The statements of these officers, several of whom are at present in Great Britain, have confirmed that in the first days of May there occurred one of those sudden changes in the weather so characteristic of the continental climate, that it turned warm and that "the sun was beating down."

2. Negative Evidence

a. On the Katyn bodies were found large numbers of newspapers and letters written by the prisoners to their families as well as a certain number of letters which they had written but had had no chance to dispatch. None of these documents are dated further back than 11th May, the day on which, as borne out by the foregoing considerations, the extermination of the Katyn victims was completed. Moreover, it should also be borne in mind as pointed out above that while the newspapers and letters found in the seven Katyn graves are dated April 1940, the newspapers found in the eighth grave are dated 1st and 6th May 1940. It is well known that very strong pro-Soviet propaganda was being launched in the three prisoner camps at that time and in this connection not only were the prisoners allowed to purchase newspapers, but they were given facilities to do so. Had the prisoners from Kozielsk after detaining at the Gnezdovo station been taken to the three "special" camps near Smolensk, we may rest assured that they would have continued to purchase newspapers there. If, therefore, as maintained by the Soviet report, they had been murdered in August and September 1941, then newspapers, bearing a later date than those found in the Katyn graves, should have been found on their bodies.

b. The same evidence is provided in an even more striking form by the study of the diaries and notes found on the bodies in Katyn. Entries in these diaries, more than a dozen of which were discovered in the Katyn Graves, all suddenly stop in April 1940. *The most characteristic is the diary of Major A. Solski, who describes the detaining on the station, their transfer to "somewhere into a wood, something like a country house," the "special" search and the removal of his watch and roubles. The entries then suddenly break off. Even if we overlook the fact that the last sentence of the diary exactly fits the description of the N. K. V. D. Rest House in Katyn, the question remains why the author who had succeeded in secreting his diary in spite of a "special" search, had made no entry in it after*

9th April 1940. Why did the others make no entries in their diaries, which all break off at the description of the departure from Kozielsk, or the description of the train journey in prison waggons? If they were not murdered by the Germans until August and September 1941, they must have had many interesting facts to jot down, even were it only the advance of the front and the capture of the camps by the Germans.

The lack of any documents bearing a later date may only be explained in one way, i. e., the destruction of such documents by the Germans, this being an element of the German "provocation" as presented by the Soviet report. We shall discuss this view later on. Here we must only state that the diaries found in Katyn give the impression of being intact and show no traces of any erasures or of pages having been torn out.

In summing up it must be stated that both the positive and negative evidence all points to April 1940 as the date of the massacre.

In the light of the arguments set out in paragraphs B, C, and D, we arrive at the conclusion that all evidence points to the Soviet authorities as the perpetrators of the murder and without prejudice to the final decision it must be recognised that the Soviet authorities come under serious suspicion regarding the crime.

E. ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES

Let us in turn observe the behaviour of the "suspect" before the discovery of the murder and what explanation he gave of the murder after its discovery.

1. Before the Polish-Soviet Treaty of 30th July 1941 no official enquiry was addressed to the Soviet authorities concerning the fate of the prisoners of war from the three large camps, but individual questions were asked by their families and colleagues who had been deported to Giazovetz.

In the first place the families, ignorant of the liquidation of these three camps, continued to write to the former addresses. This correspondence was returned by the Soviet Postal Service stamped: "Retour—Parti," instead of being forwarded to the new camps, where according to the Soviet report, these prisoners were now detained. This is the more strange as the prisoners from Kozielsk and Starobielsk who had been deported to Giazovetz, continued to receive letters sent to their former addresses, i. e., to Kozielsk and Starobielsk.

Some of the families of the prisoners detained in the three large camps, who had also been deported to the U. S. S. R., made a direct approach in writing to the Soviet authorities as to the fate of their husbands or fathers. Two concrete instances of this are known, one from a German and the other from a Polish source.

The wife of 2nd Lt. R. Urbanski, from Kozielsk, whose body was found in Katyn and who herself had been deported to Kazakhstan, approached the Soviet authorities with a request for the address of her husband who had not given her any sign of life since March 1940. This application is said to have been found by the Germans in the records of the Smolensk branch of the N. K. V. D. together with the following annotation: "Inform her that he has been transferred to an unknown camp." This was an obvious falsehood. Had Lt. Urbanski, as stated by the Soviet report, been detained in one of the "special" camps some 25–40 kilometres west of Smolensk, the Smolensk branch of the N. K. V. D. functionaries of which received convoys at the Gnezdovo station, could not have been ignorant of the fact.

The other case concerns the family of one of the prisoners from Ostashkov. His family had been deported to Kazakhstan and in reply to enquiries he received the following answer signed by the judge in Ostashkov: "The camp where your father was detained was liquidated in the spring of 1940. The present whereabouts of your father is not known."

The prisoners deported to Giazovetz received letters from Poland with enquiries about their colleagues from Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov. When they questioned the local camp authorities as to the fate of these people, they were given obscure or evasive answers. When they addressed their enquiries to the N. K. V. D. delegate who arrived in Giazovetz from Moscow, they were told that the Giazovetz camp was the only officers' camp and that the rest of the officers had been released and sent home.

Against the background of these evasive or simply untrue statements, the reply stands out clearly as made by Beria and Merkulov during their conversation with Colonel Berling's group during their meeting in Lubianka in the Autumn of 1940. While they were talking about organizing a "Polish division" within the framework of the Red Army, and Colonel Berling pointed out the possibility of making use in this connection of Polish officers from Kozielsk and Starobielsk, he was told

that with regard to these officers "a great mistake had been made" and that, in consequence, they could not be counted on for service. This statement is quite incomprehensible as long as we accept the Soviet thesis which states that at that time the prisoners of war were said to be working on road construction in the district of Smolensk. The transfer of prisoners to these camps could under no circumstances have been regarded as a mistake of such importance as to exclude the possibility of officers being called upon for service.

After the conclusion in July 1941 of the Polish-Soviet Treaty, the Polish authorities were able to make official enquiries and extensive use was made of this opening, especially since in connection with the formation of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. there arose an acute shortage of officers.

The first enquiries about the "missing prisoners of war" were addressed by officers of General Anders's Headquarters direct to Soviet Liaison officers. They were informed that a considerable number of Polish officers had been released in 1940 and sent back to Poland, an untrue assertion. Later, when the Polish authorities realised that this was a false explanation, since the Polish Underground Organisation intimated that not one of the prisoners who had been detained in the three large camps had been located either in Poland or in any of the German prisoners' camps, the matter was taken up in Polish diplomatic and political circles in a series of conversations and Notes.

These conversations were conducted both by the Polish Ambassador in the U. S. S. R. with the Soviet Government and by the Polish Foreign Office in London with the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish Government in London. In the conversations conducted in the U. S. S. R. Poland was represented by Ambassador Kot, by General Sikorski during his Moscow visit, and by General Anders. The conversations were conducted on behalf of the Soviets by Vice Commissar Vishinsky, Commissar Molotov, and Stalin, i. e., on the very highest levels.

The matter of the "missing" officers was first broached in the Kot-Vishinsky conversation on 6.10.1941 and for the last time before the Katyn revelations again in the Kot-Vishinsky conversation on 8.7.1942. These conversations covered therefore a period of nine months.

In all these conversations the representatives of the Soviet authorities, i. e., Molotov and Vishinsky, persistently declared that all the Poles, including all prisoners of war, had been released, but they supplied no details concerning this alleged release. In his early conversations Vishinsky gave assurances that he would investigate the matter of the "missing" officers and would supply the required information as the Soviet authorities possessed "lists of all, dead or alive" but during the later conversations, and especially during the last one, he stated that the Soviet authorities possessed no lists of released prisoners.

The same attitude was taken up by the Soviet authorities in their Notes and Aide-Memoires in which this matter was dealt with. Of basic importance in this matter is the Soviet Note of the 8th November, 1941, to which the N. K. V. D. always invariably referred in all subsequent letters. This Note categorically stated that all prisoners of war had been released. Since this Note was a reply to the Polish Note of 1.11.1941, requesting the release from camps and prisons of the "missing prisoners of war," at a time when the Katyn graves had not yet been discovered, it could not have been interpreted in any other manner than as a reply to the enquiries about the prisoners of war from the three large camps. Even in the light of the Soviet report entitled "The Truth about Katyn" this declaration must be classified as evasive in its form and not in accordance with the facts of the case.

Stalin's replies made to Ambassador Kot, General Sikorski, and General Anders bore a slightly different character.

In his first conversation with Ambassador Kot, on 14.11.1941 when the latter broached the matter of the camps in Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov, Stalin said that he would investigate this matter. He rang up the N. K. V. D. and asked how the matter of the release of the Poles stood. After a few minutes, he received an answer on the phone but did not refer to the matter again during his conversation.

In his conversation with General Sikorski on 3.12.1941 Stalin also stated that everybody, including officers, had been released, and when pressed again by General Sikorski, expressed the supposition that the Polish officers, prisoners of war had escaped to . . . Manchuria, and he closed his conversation with a promise to issue special instructions to his executive organs.

Finally, on 18.3.1942 in his conversation with General Anders, when the latter broached the matter of the prisoners of war from Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and

Ostashkov, Stalin declared: "I do not know where they are. Why should I keep them? It may be that they were in camps in territories taken by the Germans and were dispersed," and forthwith he turned the conversation into other channels.

Even in the light of the official Soviet report the declarations of the highest Soviet authority were intrinsically contrary to the truth and, as far as the form is concerned, evasive.

2. After the German revelations about the Katyn affair the Soviet authorities who, up to that time had tried to cover up the matter of the "missing" prisoners of war under the more general question of the release of Poles, and who continually repeated the same formula to the effect that all Poles had been released now, after several days' silence, put forward their own full version concerning the fate of the prisoners of war from the three camps.

These authorities who had heretofore stubbornly asserted that they knew nothing whatever of the fate of these prisoners, suddenly stated that they knew not only what had happened to these prisoners as long as they were in Russian hands, i. e., up to the time when they were supposedly captured by the Germans, but they even knew what had happened after the Germans had captured them. It should be emphasised here that the corresponding statements of the Soviet authorities contained in the communiqués of the "Soviet Inf. Bureau" of the 15th and 17th April 1943, were issued at a time when the area of Katyn was in German hands and when it was impossible to interrogate all those witnesses who, in January 1944, so clearly revealed in the Soviet report the details and the story of the "German provocation."

Already then, as was stated in the communiqué of the 17th April 1943, the Soviet authorities knew that these prisoners of war had been murdered by the Germans, that the Gestapo from its archives had supplied papers and documents which were placed in the Katyn graves. It might be said that these were mere suppositions, but it is astonishing that they should have proved to be so accurate, that witnesses in January 1944 should have confirmed them down to the smallest detail.

On the 17th April 1943 was issued a Communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence in London announcing the intention to approach the International Red Cross with a request to investigate the matter. The Soviet reaction was immediate, because as early as the 19th April 1943 there appeared in the Moscow Pravda an article entitled "Hitler's Polish Collaborators" which, among other things, embodied a definite refusal to allow the International Red Cross to investigate the Katyn murder. The Pravda article was reprinted on 20th April 1943, by the official Izvestia and the official TASS agency in a communiqué of the same date declared that same day that this article fully reflected the attitude taken up by the Soviet official circles in this matter.

This attitude is absolutely inexplicable if the Soviet thesis that the massacre was carried out by the Germans is to be accepted. In a massacre on such a scale, the truth could not, naturally, be hidden, if the investigations were honestly carried out. The Soviet government could easily have asked for suitable guarantees on such matter as the composition of the International Red Cross Commission, passes for its own representatives or the protection of the International Red Cross for the witnesses, etc., and have opposed the investigations if these guarantees had been refused or have interrupted the investigations, had these guarantees not been honoured. Instead of this the Soviet Government at once rejected, without any discussion, the proposal to have the affair investigated by an international institution.

We come, ultimately, to the Soviet report itself, as contrasted with the German report, which was drawn up with the participation of the "European Medical Commission," composed of eminent experts of twelve European nations, the Soviet report is the product of purely Soviet authorship. The Soviet authorities did not consider it necessary to invite the participation of anyone from outside the Soviet Union. If in 1943 one might have questioned the impartiality of an investigation, even were it carried out by the International Red Cross while the area was occupied by the Germans, in 1944, this reason had ceased to exist. Had Soviet authorities in 1944 decided to invite some international Commission, the latter would have been able to carry out the investigation without any pressure by the Germans who had by then been driven out of these areas. Finally, a last question to which it is impossible to find an answer, if one is to accept the Soviet theory that the massacre of the Polish prisoners of war was carried out by the Germans is to be accepted. If these prisoners were being detained in July 1941 in three "special" camps west of Smolensk and were captured by the Germans,

why did Soviet authorities fail to notify Polish representatives, diplomatic or military, about it at the proper time?

This question is of fundamental importance.

To this must be added one detail which is immensely significant. According to the Soviet report, the three "special" camps of Polish prisoners of war, situated at a distance of 25-40 kilometres west of Smolensk, are said to have fallen into German hands in July 1941, or, to be exact, after the 12th July of that year. Ambassador Maisky declared in London on 4th July 1941 that the number of Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. did not exceed 20,000. This figure differs little from the number of prisoners of war actually handed over by the Soviet authorities in August 1941 to General Anders, i. e., 28,000. It is incomprehensible, however, why Soviet authorities, in informing their ambassador in London before the 4th July 1941, i. e., at least 8 days before the day when the Germans were supposed to have captured the three "special" camps did not include these prisoners in their calculations. After all, these prisoners totalled approximately 15,000 men—a figure recently confirmed in the Nurnberg trial by Prosecutor Rudenko, i. e., a figure almost as large as that submitted by Maisky. It is possible that they had simply not taken them into their calculations, since already, even before the alleged capture of the camps by the Germans, their existence was no longer to be taken into consideration when the Polish Army was being organised in the U. S. S. R., just as they had not been taken into consideration as early as the Autumn of 1940, during Colonel Berling's conversation with Beria and Merkulov.

All the above facts, difficulties, and doubts find no explanation in the Soviet report and they therefore point to Soviet guilt.

NOTE.—The comprehensive report on the Katyn massacre prepared by the Polish Government in exile in London follows:

EXHIBIT 32—(Continued)

FACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED BY THE U. S. S. R. DURING THE 1939 CAMPAIGN

FOREWORD.

In the Spring of this year, three years had lapsed since the whole world had been stirred with the news of the mysterious deaths of thousands of Polish officers and men captured by the Russians in the 1939 Campaign and who since have been kept in captivity on Russian soil.

The disputes concerning the responsibility of the crime arose; but to the unbiased observer, the facts that were exposed by these disputes might not have given a clear picture of the whole situation. Now, however, much new evidence has been gathered and new facts established. These notes presenting the factual circumstances of the KATYN AFFAIR, may be helpful for the reader to establish in his mind the right answer to the question.

These facts, as presented on the following pages, are based on material collected since 1940 when, in the Spring, the sudden interruption of the correspondence with the Polish prisoners of war of the September, 1939 Campaign who were, up to that time, in camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in U. S. S. R., gave rise to great anxiety about their fate, among Poles everywhere. In the Autumn of the same year communication once again became possible but only with a few hundred of them. The vast majority, about fifteen thousand, disappeared leaving absolutely no trace.

The changing circumstances of the war made very difficult the passage to and fro of people and news. This meant that the first information to be received about the Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. was vague and uncertain, full of unexplained gaps and striking contradictions.

The conclusion of the Polish Soviet Pact of July 1941 and the consequent liberation of some hundreds of prisoners of war from a camp at Giasovetz and many hundreds of thousands of other Poles from Soviet prisons and camps, greatly increased the amount of information available as also the rumours about this mysterious affair. During many months, the reestablished Polish Embassy in Russia and the Polish Military Command of the Polish troops at that time being organised there, made every possible effort to elucidate the fate of the missing prisoners, in a long series of talks with representatives, among them the very highest, of the Soviet Authorities. These negotiations provided a lot more material, both positive and negative, but failed to solve the mystery.

The German Katyn Revelations pulled aside the curtain by a little. Three years after the prisoners were first missing, in April 1943, the Moscow "Pravda" ("Truth") wrote that at last it had "now become perfectly clear" that they had been "bestially murdered". The entirely convincing evidence from the Katyn Graves left no doubt about the truth of this statement. But, there was still complete uncertainty as to when the monstrous crime was committed, in what circumstances and by whom. Two powerful states, Germany of 1943 and U. S. S. R., who hold in their exclusive possession all the material evidence of the Katyn crime, hurled accusations at one another and lay their respective evidence before the world.

This evidence was not always convincing and who knows if it was assembled in order that the real truth might be revealed and not, on the contrary, more deeply hidden. Sometimes, it fitted in with and supplemented materials already collected about the fate of the Polish prisoners and sometimes it was in flat contradiction to it.

Slowly, however, as a result of the immense amount of work put into collecting information piece by piece, information of diverse kinds from diverse sources and the unceasing attempt to fit these pieces together, there emerged a picture which, gloomy as was, almost certainly reflected the objective truth. This picture is not, even yet, complete, many pieces are missing, some of them containing important details, and only access to the documents in the Archives of the Soviet N. K. V. D. could completely elucidate the fate of the Polish officers. The main outlines, however, of the picture are now almost clear. These outlines are presented on the following pages, which consist of a description of part of the material collected in connection with the affair. They comprise three PARTS:

PART ONE, the story of the Polish prisoners of war in the three big camps and of those of them who were later found, up till July 1941.

PART TWO, the history of the efforts of the Polish authorities from August 1941 up till the time of the Katyn Revelations to find the missing prisoners.

PART THREE, a critical presentation of both the German and the Soviet version of the story of the Katyn murder.

The picture presented in these notes is not, we repeat, complete. There is still very much more to be made clear. We can only express the hope that, in the interests of Truth, the future will reveal the facts that can fill the gaps and shed light on the obscurities.

If however, because of the powerful political interests that are involved in the affair of the missing prisoners, the number of authentic documents available concerning the Katyn Affair is not increased but on the contrary, lessened, thereby making room for apocryphal ones to be put in their place, the documents described in these notes will at least present the evidence for as much of the true story of the Polish prisoners of war of 1939 missing in the U. S. S. R. as it is possible to tell in the Spring of 1946.

INTRODUCTION

1. *The Red Army enters Poland. Allies or enemies?*

When the Red Army crossed the Polish-Soviet frontier at all points on September 17th, 1939, the general public, surprised by their arrival, was convinced that they had come to help fight the Germans. Polish state authorities too, both civilian and military, in the so-called "Rumanian bridgehead" in the South-Eastern area of Poland, were at first unaware of the real character of the Soviet move.

When, therefore, in the early hours of September 17th 1939, the first reports of the crossing of the Polish frontier by the Red Army began to reach the Polish central authorities from various places, the civil authorities issued instructions to all Polish administrative authorities and police in the frontier regions not only to remain at their posts to maintain peace and order, but to establish contact with the commanders of the advancing Red Army units, placing themselves at their disposition as allies in the fight against Germany.

A similar attitude was shown by the military authorities, who ordered the commanders of Polish detachments in the eastern territories of Poland to establish friendly contact with the Soviet commanders and under no circumstances to allow any Polish-Soviet incidents.

The situation was clarified during the course of the day.

Simultaneously with the Red Army's move into Poland, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Potemkin, attempted to hand to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, Wacław Grzybowski, a note in which the Government of the U. S. S. R. adopted a very unfriendly attitude towards Poland.

abandoning its neutrality in the Polish-German war and denouncing all international treaties and agreements concluded with Poland among others the Peace Treaty of March 18th, 1921, the Kellogg Pact of 1928, the Treaty of Non-aggression of 25th July 1932, binding until 31st December 1945 etc. In justification of Russia's hostile attitude to Poland, he made the fantastic statement that "the Polish State and its Government had in fact ceased to exist" and that as the population had become a defenceless prey to whatever fate might overtake them, it was necessary for the Soviet Government to take it under its protection. For technical reasons the contents of this note, with the information as to the true nature of the Soviet move, only reached the Polish Government at 10 a. m. on September 17th, that is, several hours after the instructions and orders for the adoption of a friendly attitude to the Soviet Army had been issued.

Despite the tragic situation of Poland, attacked from west and east by two powerful neighbours, the Polish Government, trusting in the treaties concluded with the Western Democracies, decided not to lay down arms but to transfer the Centre of Polish resistance against the overwhelming might of both aggressors to the territory of her western allies.

The intensive bombardment by German planes and the double invasion from east and west seriously impaired communications and made it difficult for the instructions of the central authorities to reach their destinations.

The apprehensions of local authorities and individual commanders was confirmed by the behaviour of the Soviet troops, by radio announcements from Kiev, Minsk and Moscow, and by leaflets dropped from Soviet planes, calling upon Polish soldiers to lay down their arms and come over to the Red Army in order to "build up a happy, prosperous life".

In accordance with the first instructions issued by the central authorities, Government and local Government authorities in the provinces bordering on Soviet Russia approached the Soviet army in a confident and cordial manner and appealed for similar behaviour on the part of the population. (Proclamations calling on the people to receive the Red Army as friends were issued by the Mayors of Stanislawow, Tarnopol, Dubno and other towns. But when the prefects of frontier countries went out to meet the Soviet detachments, in order to put themselves at their disposal, they were immediately arrested (e. g. Kocuper, sheriff of Zbaraz) or even shot (e. g. Jarocki, sheriff of Sarny). Polish policemen and officers of Polish units who were trying to establish friendly relations with the Soviet Army were disarmed, ill-treated and arrested. Seeing this, all Polish units which were still capable of action decided to defend themselves.

Stubborn fighting by organised Polish units lasted for several weeks after September 17th, proving the falsehood of statements in the Soviet note regarding the "non-existence" of the Polish state organization, on September 17th. General Kleberg's group, comprising several divisions, fought on Polish territory between Brest Litovsk and Lublin against both aggressors until October 7th, 1939. Smaller units continued to fight considerably longer.

2. Soviets question Poland's right to resist aggression

The German aggression on Poland resulted in the outbreak of the Second World War. During the war, until the conclusion of the peace treaties, all relations between the belligerent states and their armed forces are regulated by the appropriate rules of international law. The legal situation created by the Soviet aggression against Poland was extremely complicated. On the night of 17th September, 1939, the U. S. S. R. clearly renounced her neutrality in the Polish-German war and commenced armed hostilities against Poland. But she did not formally declare war and, despite the official treaty of friendship concluded by her with belligerent Germany on 28th September, 1939, she still maintained normal peaceful relations with the other members of the anti-German coalition. The Japanese aggression against China in 1932 had established a precedent in the law of nations for the existence of a state of armed hostilities between two nations without a formal declaration of war.¹ But in the case of

¹ The official history of the Soviet Communist Party describes the Japanese action on Chinese territory in Manchuria as follows: "Perceiving that, owing to the economic crisis, the European powers and the U. S. A. were wholly engrossed in their domestic affairs, the Japanese imperialists decided to seize the opportunity and bring pressure on poorly defended China, in an attempt to subjugate her and to lord it over the country. Unscrupulously exploiting "local incidents" they themselves had provoked, the Japanese imperialists, like robbers, without declaring war on China, marched their troops into Manchuria thereby preparing a convenient place d'armes for the conquest of North China" . . . (History of the Soviet Communist Party, London 1943, p. 276).

Poland the situation was immensely complicated by Russia's denial of the existence of a Polish state after September 17th, 1939.

The Soviet theory of the "collapse" of the Polish state, which was the alleged reason for the intervention of the U. S. S. R. was in glaring contradiction to the facts.

The Soviet Army was at first welcomed in Poland, which fact was immediately emphasised in an official communique of the Soviet General Staff on 17th September, 1939. This was due to a tragic misunderstanding and was in accordance with the instructions issued by the Polish central authorities. When the real nature of Soviet intervention was revealed later, the Polish army—again in accordance with the instructions of the Polish central authorities—put up a stubborn resistance to the Red army in which they were supported up by the civilian population. It is significant that none of the later communiqués of the Soviet General Staff made any reference to the friendly attitude of the local population towards the invading forces.

The communiqués of the General Staff of the U. S. S. R. army, as well as orders issued by the supreme commanders of that army after the termination of the Polish campaign, and official declarations of Soviet statesmen, publicly stated that the Soviet Army in Poland met with serious, organised resistance from the Polish army, which was difficult to overcome.¹

In spite of this indisputable evidence of the existence of an effective state organisation on Polish territory, with armed forces at its disposal, the Soviet authorities obstinately maintained that the Soviet armies crossed into Poland "at the moment of the complete collapse of the Polish state".²

Also they consequently denied that the operations of the Soviet Armies in Poland constituted an act of war from the point of view of international law.

Moscow's official attitude was described as follows in "The Times" correspondent's despatch from Helsinki on 17.9.39: "The Soviet Union today sent troops across the frontier to stab Poland in the back. The intention apparently is to conquer White Russia and the Ukraine. The invasion is not regarded in Moscow as an act of war, because according to the Soviet thesis the Polish State has ceased to exist". ("The Times," Nr. 48413, September 18th, 1939).

3. Prisoners of War or common "Criminals" and "Bandits"?

Denying the existence of a Polish state organisation and of the Polish Armed Forces, the Soviet army, from the moment of crossing the frontier, did not consider itself bound by any of the international laws of warfare in its actions on Polish territory.

The highest Soviet commanders had not the slightest intention of applying the rules of international law or of Polish law in the territories occupied by them, but substituted the laws of "the great Soviet fatherland". In the first days of occupation General Timoshenko, Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Front, spoke clearly of this "fatherland" in his letter to the Polish citizens in the county of Czortkov, published in the Moscow "Izvestia" of 30.9.39. A member of the "Izvestia" staff, Gabrylovitch, agreed entirely with the General's attitude, stating that the fact of the Red Army's entry was sufficient to transfer the allegiance of the population of the occupied territories (from an article entitled "Gorodok" in "Izvestia" 25.9.39).

Treating the inhabitants of the occupied territories as Soviet citizens, the authorities of the U. S. S. R. from the very beginning applied to them the Soviet penal code, threatening them with long term imprisonment or "the extreme punishment" (the death sentence) for counter-revolutionary activities injurious to the "interests of the world proletariat", "to the working class and the revolu-

¹ Marshal Stalin, in a telegram of congratulation on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1st Red Cavalry Army ("Pravda", 19.11.39) stated that this army "covered itself with glory in the battles" in Poland. These battles must have been heavy and Polish resistance organised, for it is not possible to "cover oneself with glory" when fighting a non-existent opponent.

Marshal Voroshilov, in his orders Nos. 199 of 7.11.39 and 209 of 19.11.39 stated that "in battles against Polish troops" Soviet units "showed great courage, heroism and initiative" and that in combatting the well-organised resistance of Polish troops, "unexpected blows, the surrounding and destruction of the enemy by wide and flexible manoeuvres, inexhaustible initiative skilfully co-ordinated operations of infantry units with sniper detachments and mechanised units, courage and imperviousness to fear" were necessary. ("Pravda", 7.11.39 and 19.11.39).

Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, at the 5th Extraordinary Session of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. stated that "in fighting their way through these areas (in Poland), our troops sometimes had serious encounters with Polish units, in which losses were inevitable."

² Quotation from Molotov's speech of 31.10.39.

tionary movement" or to "the basic achievements of the proletarian revolution".¹

Only in the light of this "fundamental" attitude of the Soviet authorities is it possible to understand their action in arresting immediately after the Soviet Army crossed into Poland, all officials and civil servants of the Polish State and taking proceedings against them under the articles of the Soviet penal code above-quoted.

From this point of view all members of the Polish armed forces were "criminals", particularly the officers, for whom there were no "extenuating circumstances", as there were in the case of the ranks owing to the existence of compulsory military service and the resulting forced conscription to the army in the "late" (according to Soviet terminology) Polish state. Hence even in those units which at first greeted the Red Army cordially, all regular officers and N. C. O.s were immediately arrested by the Soviet authorities.

Soviet propaganda openly called on Polish soldiers to revolt against their commanders.²

But as this propaganda did not produce good results for the Soviet authorities, before long the Soviet press began to speak not of the Polish Army but of "armed bands" of officers and "Polish bandits". Here is one of many examples. Major K. Vriedensky, in an article entitled "Podrobnosti boiev za Grodno" (Facts of the fight for Grodno) published in "Pravda" No. 266 of 25.9.39, wrote "... — About 3,000 Polish officers and military police were concentrated in the town. By force of arms this band compelled soldiers arriving from East and West to join the battle. Detachments of officers gathered in strong buildings, churches, barracks and in the residence of Prince Lubomirski . . . — Avoiding open battle these bands of officers used treacherous methods of fighting in ambush. There were cases of officers dressing themselves as soldiers or civilians. Many of them wore civilian clothes under their uniforms in case of emergency."

It should be admitted that in view of the Soviet denial, of the existence of a Polish state organisation, the latter terminology was more logical than that used earlier, when "Polish units" were referred to.

This dual terminology reflected a certain absence of unanimity of the views held by the Soviet officials. Some of them clung with the greatest obstinacy to the "basic theory" of the non-existence of the Polish State and all the logical consequences of this theory; others regarded more the situation more in the light of life real state of affairs—actual military operations against the organised armed forces of the Polish State.

This divergence of views was apparent afterwards in the treatment of Polish soldiers who fell into the hands of the Soviet authorities in various circumstances and districts. Polish soldiers were "arrested" by the Soviet authorities regardless

¹ It is characteristic that the Soviet penal code used an extremely vague terminology regarding political "crimes", referring generally to "The socialist state of workers and peasants", "the Soviet regime", "the authorities of the workers and peasants", "interests of the working people", "achievements of the proletarian revolution", "revolutionary agents of the workers' and peasants' organisation", "the working class and the revolutionary movement", etc., thereby allowing of an extremely wide interpretation of these rules. Here are some quotations from the penal code RFSSR of 1926, on which are modelled the penal codes of all other Soviet Republics:—

"Article 1 (Section): The purpose of the penal law is to protect the socialist state of workers and peasants and its established legal order from dangerous acts (crimes) by applying to the perpetrators of these acts the measures for social protection contained in this code.

"Article 6: As socially dangerous is considered any action or omission against the Soviet regime or infringement of the legal order established by the workers' and peasants' authorities for the transitional period preceding the setting up of a communist regime.

"Article 58 Para. 1: As counter-revolutionary are regarded all activities aimed at overthrowing, undermining or weakening the authority of the workers and peasants Soviets . . . or the basic economic, political and national achievements of the proletarian revolution. In view of the international solidarity of all workers' interests, such activities are also considered counter-revolutionary if they are directed against any other workers state not forming part of the Soviet Union.

"Article 58 Para. 8: Terrorist acts directed against representatives of the Soviet authorities or revolutionary agents of workers' and peasants' organisation . . . (shooting or imprisonment for a period not less than 3 years).

"Article 58 Para. 11: Any kind of organised action aimed at preparing or carrying out the crimes set out in this chapter, as well as participation in an organisation formed for the purpose of preparing or committing any of the crimes enumerated in this chapter will be punishable in accordance with the measures for social protection indicated in the respective articles of this chapter.

"Article 58 Para. 13: Any activities or active combat against the working class and the revolutionary movement, committed while occupying an official or secret position under the Tsarist regime or in counter-revolutionary governments during the civil war, are punishable under the measures for social protection indicated in Article 58 Para. 2 of this code." (Shooting or imprisonment for a period of not less than three years.)

It should be noted that when in early summer, 1945, 16 Polish citizens, among them the C. in C. of the Underground Home Army and 3 ministers of the Underground Government were brought to trial in Moscow, they were accused and condemned under the articles 58 Para. 8, 58 Para. 11 and 58 Para. 12a of the Soviet Penal Code quoted above.

² "Soldiers!" ran the proclamation of 21.9.39 issued in relatively good Polish by General Timoshenko, commander of the Ukrainian front—"Kill your officers and generals. Do not obey the orders of your officers. Drive them from your land. Come confidently to us, to your brothers, to the Red Army."

of whether they were captured on the battlefield in possession of arms or taken prisoner after a general capitulation of forces surrounded by the Red Army.¹

They were also arrested—

a) from units which at first cordially greeted the supposed allies as they crossed into Poland;

b) from among those officers and N. C. Os. who voluntarily and loyally reported for the "registration" ordered by the occupation authorities after the occupation of the country;

c) and from among those who did not report for this registration. The Soviet authorities arrested all officers in uniform (not attached to any unit, or belonging to the reserve pool of officers evacuated to the east etc.), or people in civilian clothes or in uniform of the ranks who were suspected of being officers concealing their rank from the occupation authorities. For a few months after September 1939, the Soviet authorities treated all these categories uniformly. Sometimes *all* were treated as prisoners of war (the weaker tendency), sometimes *all* were treated as "criminals" who had violated the laws of the "Soviet legal order" (stronger tendency). In consequence of the second tendency, prisoners of war in the strictest sense of the word, i. e. soldiers captured on the battlefield in possession of arms, were not only deprived of the privileges accorded to prisoners of war, by international convention, but were on the contrary treated as "criminals", twice, for in addition to the "crime" of belonging to a bourgeois army hostile to the proletarian state, they were also "bandits" putting up armed resistance to the Red Army, which was carrying out the orders of the "legal" authorities of the Soviet state—the international fatherland of the proletariat.

Polish soldiers taken prisoner by the Soviets had absolutely no knowledge of these "legal interpretations". Confident that as prisoners of war they would be accorded the well-known to them international rights and privileges laid down by the Geneva and Hague conventions, it did not occur to them that these would be withheld.²

In order to understand the "legal" position in which Polish soldiers afterwards found themselves in the "N. K. V. D. prisoner of war camps" at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, it is necessary to realise the consequences of the above mentioned "legal interpretation" arising with the "irresistible, iron necessity of logic" from the fundamental thesis of the U. S. S. R. note of 17.9.39 on the "non-existence of the Polish state".

That is why we give this theoretical introduction to the story of the Polish officers who disappeared in the U. S. S. R., an introduction, which may make more intelligible to the Western mind, the fragmentary story which follows.

PART ONE. POLISH P. O. W.s IN U. S. S. R. BEFORE 1941.

CHAPTER I. POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 1939.

4. *How many Polish servicemen were taken prisoner by the Soviets?*

The following communiqués issued by the General Staff of the Red Army during the hostilities in Eastern Poland gave the numbers of Polish servicemen taken prisoner as follows:—

a) the communiqué of 20.9.39 states: "According to incomplete reports, about 60,000 officers and men have been taken prisoner."

¹ A characteristic example of capitulation is the surrender of the city of Lwow to the Armies of the Soviet Union, signed on 22.9.39 in Winniki by the commander of the 6th Army Corps, Maj. Gen. Langner, and a representative of the Soviet Forces:

"In view of the encirclement of the Polish Army in the city of Lwow by formations of the Red Army on one side and by German formations on the other, the Commander of the Polish Army Corps, Maj. Gen. W. Langner, sees no practical sense in prolonging further the slaughter of his troops and of the innocent civilian population of the city. Consequently the Commander of the Corps, Maj. Gen. Langner, is obliged to take the decision of coming to an agreement with the Commanders of the Red Army regarding the surrender of the city of Lwow and its garrison on the following terms:— . . . Section 8. Personal freedom and immunity of moveable property is guaranteed to officers of the Polish Army. In the case of travel to the territory of another state, the matter will be decided by the civil authorities through diplomatic channels . . ."

The above agreement was never in the slightest degree observed by the Soviets, and all officers from Lwow were sent to the camp of Starobielsk, together with other prisoners of war. According to some of these officers who survived Starobielsk, the above quoted Section 8 of the agreement of 22.9.39 was included in the act of capitulation after the Soviet signatories, had promised to make arrangements for all Polish officers who desired to go through Rumania or Hungary to France in order to continue the fight against Germany.

² It should be pointed out that the U. S. S. R. never signed the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners. Strictly speaking therefore, the rules of these conventions were not applicable to persons taken prisoner by the U. S. S. R. or to Soviet prisoners in other states. But a considerable part of the Geneva Conventions may be considered as the generally accepted international standard of all civilised peoples—one therefore as a common law binding also the U. S. S. R.

b) the communiqué of 23.9.39 stated: "According to additional reports, 8,000 officers and men were taken prisoner during the liquidation of a group of Polish troops south-east of Kowel on 22.9.39.

e) in the communiqué of 24.9.39 it was stated: "Units of the Red Army destroyed a large detachment of Polish troops South-East of the Brest fortress, disarming and taking prisoner over 10,000 officers and men. In the areas South and North-East of Hrubieszow an infantry regiment and units of a motorised brigade were surrounded and taken prisoner".

d) according to the communiqué of 26.9.39: "in breaking the resistance of the remains of the Polish army . . . units of the Red Army disarmed and took prisoners between Brest Litovsk and Wlodawa 25 military transports, numbering 25,000 officers and men".

e) the communiqué of 28.9.39 stated: "units of the Red Army disarmed and took prisoner 5 regiments of cavalry with 15 guns in the region of Krupienice and also liquidated scattered groups of Polish troops".

The total number of Polish soldiers taken prisoner during the September campaign was not disclosed in the communiqués issued by the General Staff of the Red Army. According to some estimates worked out on the basis of these communiqués, about 166,000 officers and men fell into Soviet hands between September 17th and September 28th 1939.

On the anniversary of the U. S. R.'s attack on Poland, the official organ of the Red Army, *Krasnaia Zvezda* ("Red Star") of 17.9.40 (No. 218/4667) gave the following figures: "In the course of 12-15 days the enemy was completely defeated and destroyed. During the same period one Army Group of the Ukrainian Front alone surrounded and took prisoner 10 generals, 52 colonels, 72 lieutenant colonels, 5,131 officers, 4,096 junior officers (?) and 181,223 men of the Polish Army".

In an article by Corps Commissar S. Kozhevnikov entitled "A Historical March", further figures are given probably additional to those given in the above article. The author states that in the region of Dubno 500 officers and 5,500 men were taken prisoner, and during the liquidation of General Anders' group, 2 generals, 3 colonels, over 50 other officers and 1,000 men were also taken. In the region of Wlodzimierz Wolynski a tank brigade captured 1,500 officers and 12,000 men. Another brigade, commanded by comrade Bogomolov, took 15,000 prisoners in the same region and 3,000 officers and men in the Lublin area. And, finally, in the battle of Grodno 38 officers, 28 junior officers (?) and 1,477 men were stated to have been taken prisoner.

Adding the figures given in the article "*Krasnaia Zvezda*", it appears that in the period up to the middle of October 1939, 230,670 Polish soldiers, including 12 generals and about 8,000 officers, fell into Soviet hands.

To this number must be added the regular and reserve officers arrested by the Soviet occupation authorities on Polish territory, who after some considerable time were counted as prisoners of war, together with the Polish soldiers interned in Lithuania and Latvia in 1939, who, after the "incorporation" of these states into the Soviet Union in 1940, also fell into Soviet hands.

On the basis of these figures the total number of Polish "prisoners of war" in the U. S. S. R. may be estimated as being over 250,000, of which more than 10,000 were officers.

5. Three methods of treating Polish soldiers captured by the Soviets.

The Soviet administrative machinery, unprepared for so large a number of prisoners, had considerable difficulty in dealing with them, all the more so because at that time there were three different points of view as to what should be their treatment and status:

A. According to the official communiqués of the General Staff of the Red Army, they were "normal" prisoners of war and as such entitled to be treated in accordance with the rules of international law.

B. According to the "theoretical conception" of the "nonexistence" of the Polish State, held by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (official note of 17.9.39) and the declared opinion of the Soviet press, (undoubtedly shared by the N. K. V. D., i. e. Russian Secret Police) these prisoners were "members of armed bands" resisting the armies of the legal Soviet authorities, thereby causing the great sufferings to the local population. Their treatment from the point of the Soviet law should therefore be that of ordinary "criminals", and "malefactors".

C. According to the proclamation of the commander of the Ukrainian front, General Timosjenko, they were Soviet sympathisers who had voluntarily come over to the side of the Red Army, and should therefore be treated as friends.

While the first conception applied equally to officers and other ranks and called for more or less equal treatment for all, the second and third conceptions drew a sharp distinction between officers, regular N. C. Os and volunteers, fighting of their own free will against the Soviet armies on the one hand and on the other men compulsorily "mobilised" for the Polish Army and "compelled by force" to resist the Red Army.

6. *The Fate of officers and men in Soviet captivity.*

While the ranks of the police, Military Frontier Guard and military police were treated just as badly as were the officers, in many cases the ranks of the army, after having been disarmed and made to listen to demagogic speeches about their "liberation" by the Red Army from "the Polish landlords' yoke" and from the war started by those landlords, were set free and sent home. There were many exceptions to this rule. The ranks of the infantry were often kept in camps surrounded by barbed wire, exposed to cold and hunger, or deported to the interior of Russia, from where some of them (usually the aged, those belonging to the so-called national minorities or inhabitants of the Eastern territories of Poland) were freed and sent home. Some were dragged from camp to camp and finally sent to forced labour in the coal mines of the Donetz Basin or to the extreme North of Russia to build aerodromes, roads, etc.

It is even more difficult to discover any rules governing the treatment of Polish N. C. Os by the Russian authorities. In general they occupied a middle position between that of men and officers. Some, undoubtedly the minority, were sent home with the men; the majority, together with a minority of the men, shared the fate of officers and were sent to prisoner-of-war or labour camps.

It is noteworthy that Polish officers and N. C. Os, soon realizing that the attitude of the Soviet authorities to prisoners of war was definitely influenced by their military rank, began to take off their insignias and disguise themselves as privates. There is no known case of men giving away officers hiding among them.¹

Of the many officers who survived Soviet captivity, most of them owe their liberation to the fact that during the whole of their detention the Soviet authorities were never able to discover their real rank. When, therefore, reference is made to privates, N. C. Os, or officers, only those whose rank was known to the Soviet authorities are included.

7. *Prisoner of war camps.*

The privates, N. C. Os and officers in Soviet captivity were kept in about a hundred prison camps, some of which were situated on Polish territory (almost exclusively for privates), others in the interior of Russia (containing all officers, most N. C. Os. and some privates). A number of these camps were only rallying points and were soon liquidated; others existed until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. After May, 1940, many of the camps inhabited by Polish N. C. Os. and privates were transferred to the far North, to the Kola Republic and the Kola peninsula, between the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean (region of the Ponoï river). This was the foundation of the widely circulated rumour that Polish officers were sent to the distant northern territories of Russia.

During the first period after September, 1939 many thousands of people were herded in these prison camps, in terribly overcrowded and insanitary conditions, either in half-ruined barracks or in no less ruined buildings, such as churches or monasteries destroyed by the Revolution. They usually slept on the ground without mattresses or blankets. Once every 24 hours, at varying times, food was brought to them, usually consisting of thin lentil soup and a piece of bread.

At first the treatment of officers (and sometimes N. C. Os too) was very bad. They were not separated from the ranks and in camps in the interior of Russia were made to perform particularly heavy and unpleasant tasks (carrying water, peeling potatoes, cleaning latrines etc.). This was done with the object of humiliating them and was a specific method of propaganda and agitation aimed at winning the sympathy of the soldiers.

But in this respect the Soviet authorities met with great disappointment. Most of the Polish soldiers were not impressed by this degradation of their commanders and did their best to help them in carrying out the tasks which the authorities had ordered them to perform. On the other hand, from the Soviet point of view the presence of officers had a bad influence on the morale of the soldiers, keeping up their spirits and giving them courage. It was therefore not long before steps were taken to separate commanders from their men.

¹ In the camp at Krivoi Rog there were about 50 officers among the 6,000 Polish prisoners; in the Telenovka camp in the Donetz Basin about 25 officers among 4,000 prisoners.

During the first period of their captivity (September and October, 1939), when the officers were still with their men, most of the officers were grouped in several camps, mostly in the regions of Shepietovka, Putyvl, Boloto, the Tiotkino station near Sumy and in the monasteries of Safranovsk, Griazovietz, Yukhnov (Pavlishchev Bor), Talitza etc.¹

During the end of October and beginning of November 1939, all officers were removed from these camps and sent to two large camps for officers only at Kozielsk (province of Smolensk) and Starobielsk (province of Voroshylovgrad) in the Ukraine. At approximately the same time, as a result of the general segregation of prisoners being carried out in the camps, officers, N. C. Os and men of the military police, frontier guard, Military Frontier Guard and civil police (militarised in 1939), as well as all officers, N. C. Os. and men proved to have been engaged in intelligence work—all of whom were particularly disliked by the Soviet authorities—were sent from various camps to a special camp at Ostashkov (province of Kalinin). It is with these 3 camps, that we are chiefly concerned in the following pages.

CHAPTER II. THE KOZIELSK CAMP.

8. *Topographical and historical description.*

The Kozielsk camp was situated in the grounds of a former Orthodox monastery 5 miles from the Kozielsk railway station on the Smolensk-Briansk line (see the map at the end of PART ONE).

About 600 yards from the Monastery and separated from it by woods was the "Skit" hermitage, where the Eremite monks formerly lived. After the liquidation of monasteries in the post revolutionary period, the main monastery building was converted into "The Gorki Rest Centre for Workers" and the "Skit" into a "House for Mothers and Children". The monastery farm became a "sovkhoz" (collective farm).

The whole monastery camp was so derelict and gloomy that, judging by the descriptions on parapets, windows and walls, Soviet workers frequently expressed their desire to return home from their "rest" spent in darkness, dirt and boredom, alleviated only by bug-hunts.

In September 1939, both rest houses were earmarked for Polish prisoner of war camps. Machine gun nests were installed on the four towers and between the towers stood elevated sentry boxes for the guards. The grounds were surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, carefully guarded by armed guards of the special N. K. V. D. (secret police) army.

9. *Kozielsk I (September–October 1939)—Polish P. O. W. Camp for non-commissioned ranks.*

At first captured Polish soldiers were sent to Kozielsk as to other prisoner of war camps, without any system. By the end of September about 12,000 prisoners, mostly other ranks, were crowded into the Kozielsk camp. Conditions did not differ basically from those described above. (See page 18.)

The population of the camp was constantly changing. From time to time parties of several hundred persons were removed and others arrived in their place. The destinations of those removed are not definitely known. It is possible that some were freed and sent "home" and the others thrown into other camps.

After the middle of October, 1939, there was a noticeable tendency to empty the camp at Kozielsk. Increasingly large parties of privates were taken away and the camp became more or less deserted. During the same period a few new parties were brought to Kozielsk, composed mostly of civilians arrested on Polish territory by the Soviet authorities, among them many priests and 6 women.

In the last days of October and the first weeks of November large groups began to arrive at Kozielsk, consisting of officers and cadet officers, (who were counted as officers) brought there from various camps Shepietovki, Putyvl, Griazovietz, Yukhnov, Talitza etc.)

At the same time, the evacuation of other ranks continued as well as of the majority of civilians brought there in October. Consequently, after November 1939, Kozielsk became a special camp for Polish officers.

¹ Among others, the following larger permanent camps should be mentioned: Yelenovka (in the Donetz Basin), Juza (province of Ivanov-Voznesiensk), Karakub (near Stalino), Kozielsk (near Smolensk) Kozelshtchyzna (near Plynava), Krasny Luteh (province of Voroshylov) Krivai Rog and Marganietz (near Dnepropetrovsk), Zviahel (Novograd Volynski), Ostashkov, Suzdal, Starobielsk, etc. Altogether Polish prisoners of war were kept in about 51 camps in the territory of the U. S. S. R. and in roughly the same number of camps on Polish territory.

10. *Kozielsk II (November 1939–May 1940). Officers Camp. A. Inmates of the Camp.*

In the second period the inmates of the Kozielsk camp numbered about 5,000 persons, the great majority of whom were regular officers and reserve officers mobilised in 1939. In addition, there were in the camp a few hundred cadet officers and about 150 soldiers remaining there from the preceding period, who were made to perform the heavier work of the camp, and approximately 100 civilians. The only remaining woman was Lt. (pilot) Lewandowicz or Lewandowska, which name, according to some reports, was a pseudonym for Mrs. Dowbor-Musnicka.

The transfer of people to and from the camp decreased considerably but did not cease altogether. For instance in December, 1939, about 100 prisoners were transferred to Kozielsk from Pavlishtchev Bor, including intelligence officers, military police and military judges as well as Polish civil judges and public prosecutors. These prisoners, on whom the Soviets had probably passed long sentences of hard labour in camps of correction, looked terribly ill-treated and were particularly carefully guarded in a separate building, surrounded by barbed wire and strictly isolated from the rest of the camp. Among them were a retired Colonel named Widzcki, Mayor of Tarnopol, and Colonel Tadeusz Kornilowicz, son-in-law of the famous writer Henry Sienkiewicz. Before three weeks had elapsed the whole of this group was deported from Kozielsk in an unknown direction and all trace of it was lost.

In addition, smaller groups or single officers came and went, probably in connection with the investigations which were in progress in the camp (see below). A certain number of those individually removed from Kozielsk between December 1939 and May 1940 were afterwards found in Soviet prisons, or in correctional labour camps. (Colonel Libkind-Lubodziecki, Captain Makarozynski, etc).

The day before Christmas Eve 1939, all army chaplains were removed from Kozielsk, including the Polish Army Bishop's deputy and Monsignor Czeslaw Wojtynski. The only exception was a chaplain, Father Jan Zielkowski, who was ill in the camp hospital and therefore remained in the camp and shared the fate of the officer prisoners. Among the priests removed from Kozielsk in December 1939, was a professor of the Pinsk Seminary, Father Kantak, who was regarded as a citizen of Danzig.

Reckoning on the basis of their Polish rank, there were in the Kozielsk camp:

- 4 generals, 1 vice admiral
- about 100 Colonels and Lt. Colonels
- about 300 Majors
- about 1,000 Captains
- about 2,500 Lieutenants
- a few hundred Cadets.

Among these were approximately 200 airmen and about 50 naval officers. Approximately 50? were regular officers and the remainder reserve officers called for active service in September 1939. Among the latter were representatives of various civilian professions—the flower of Polish intelligentsia:

- a) 21 professors, lecturers and readers, from Polish universities and colleges
- d) over 300 military and civilian (mobilised) doctors, among them famous Polish specialists
- c) several hundred lawyers—judges, public prosecutors, barristers
- d) a few hundred engineers
- e) a few hundred elementary and secondary school teachers
- f) various writers, journalists, publicists, industrialists, mechants etc.

Among the prisoners at Kozielsk were also officers disabled in the last war, some of whom had lost a leg or an arm. As they were not fit for active service and were not mobilised in 1939, they were arrested by the Soviet authorities in their homes in Poland and sent to the prisoner of war camp at Kozielsk. Among them were two colonels with artificial arms. Capt. Dlugosz, a doctor with an artificial leg and Captain Horoszkiewicz, with a paralysed arm.

11. *Kozielsk II. B. The camp authorities.*

While in the first period (September–October) the prisoner of war camps were improvised and of a transitory nature, the officers' camp at Kozielsk (Kozielsk II) appeared in many respects to be organised as a permanent camp.

It is important to note that, in spite of the official use of the term "prisoner of war" in respect of the inmates, this camp was not controlled by the Soviet military authorities, but by the civil and political authorities of the Commissariat for Home Affairs (N. K. V. D.) and was administered by officers of the N. K. V. D.

The official commandant of the Kozielsk camp was N. K. V. D. Commissar Koralov. But, in fact, from November, till the middle of March 1940, the camp authorities were under the command of an N. K. V. D. general (Kombrig) named Zarubin who, according to rumours circulating among the prisoners, had at one time occupied a post in the Soviet Military Attache's office in Warsaw. N. K. V. D. Major Elman, an Estonian, was Gen. Zarubin's deputy. He spoke little, suffered from ill-health and was generally polite to the prisoners. After Zarubin's departure in March 1940, Elman succeeded him.

12. *Kozielsk II. C. Living conditions.*

Although, during the first period of captivity in the provisional camps, the possession of senior rank was a distinct disadvantage, the situation was quite the opposite in the Kozielsk camp for officers. Immediately on arrival groups of officers brought to Kozielsk were sorted out according to rank and privileged treatment was given to the higher ranks.

Generals and colonels were housed in the best, newly built block (No. 7.) where they lived under reasonably good conditions.

Lt. Colonels and some of the younger colonels were put into block No. 22, where the conditions were nearly as good. As a result of overcrowding, some of the officers had to live in corridors, but each one had a bed and a small amount of bed linen.

Majors occupied a brick building, block No. 14, situated next to block No. 7.

The remaining junior officers lived in varying conditions in other blocks. Those in wooden huts with small rooms were on the whole better off. In the large blocks, containing enormous halls equipped with several tiers of bunks, conditions were worst, owing to the constant movement, noise, dirt, bad lighting and bad air. There were also other factors which made life in the camp unpleasant—dampness, cold, shortage of water, too few and very insanitary latrines. There was a shortage of straw for mattresses, of which there was not a sufficient number to go round, only about 50% of the junior officers being supplied with them. Every prisoner received pillow cases and blankets, but very few were supplied with sheets. Difficulty in obtaining soap and water caused lice and bed-bugs.

It is noteworthy that in the monastery itself were housed only prisoners from territories occupied by the Germans and Lithuanians; all Polish officers coming from Russian-occupied territories were put into the "Skit". This separation caused rumours of the immediate release of prisoners whose homes were in Soviet occupied territories of Poland; according to these rumours, prisoners coming from German-occupied territories were to be exchanged for inhabitants of the Eastern Provinces of Poland, who were prisoners of war in German hands. Such rumours were constantly circulating in the camp, but nevertheless the inmates of the "Skit" received exactly the same treatment as those of the monastery itself. The two groups of prisoners were able to communicate with each other from time to time, when the inmates of the "Skit" came to have a bath.

In attempting to explain the radical change of attitude adopted by the Soviet authorities towards the Polish officers in the Kozielsk camp, it is necessary to remember divergence (see para. 5) of views among the Soviet authorities regarding the legal situation of Polish soldiers who had fallen into Soviet hands. It is probable that in the period between November 1939 and April 1940 there was an increasing tendency among the responsible authorities to treat them as "normal" prisoners of war with the result that the generally accepted international codes were to a certain extent recognised.

13. *Kozielsk II. D. Camp "Self-Government".*

According to international custom, normal military discipline is enforced in a prisoner of war camp, the lower ranks being subordinated to the higher ranks. In addition to the official camp authorities of the state whose prisoners the inmates are, the prisoners also have some kind of authorities of their own, lead by the senior officer in the camp.

In "normal" Soviet N. K. V. D. forced labor camps a certain type of "camp self-government" is found. N. K. V. D. authorities are in sole control outside the camp, but inside there are various "authorities" and "functionaries" chosen by the N. K. V. D. from among the prisoners. Such a method has certain advantages for the Soviet authorities:

- a) it destroys harmony among the prisoners
- b) it allows the odium for particularly unpleasant regulations to be transferred to the "self-government" authorities.
- c) prisoners wishing to take advantage of the privileges attached to camp duties are thus persuaded to serve the Soviet authorities.

The "authorities" and "functionaries" found in the Kozielsk camp were similar to those set up in all normal Soviet forced labor camps which contain only "criminals" sentenced by the Soviets.

In the Kozielsk camp the highest ranking officer was General Minkiewicz, who did not, in fact, become the Polish camp commander. But despite this fact—and even though he felt himself to be at a considerable disadvantage because he had no uniform (possessing nothing but the worn-out civilian suit in which he was arrested) and therefore hardly ever left his room—his authority was none the less universally recognised by Polish prisoners, who complied with all instructions and orders unofficially issued by him.

The Soviets appointed as Polish Commander of the Kozielsk camp an artillery Major named Czerniakowski, who enjoyed the general trust of the prisoners.

The Soviet authorities also appointed "seniors" among the inmates of each block; in the large blocks, the inmates were divided into "companies" with their own "seniors". "Seniors" or "commandants" kept detailed records of their groups and organised the distribution of bread and provisions, tobacco, and clean linen, the allocation of labor, sending the sick to the doctor, etc.

Some of the P. O. W. doctors were allowed to work in the camp's hospitals. From among the other inmates men were also detailed for special "functions" working in the kitchen and washhouses, acting as barbers, etc.

14. *Kozielsk II. E. Food and work.*

According to the regulations posted in the camp, each man should have received a daily ration of 800 grammes (about 2 lbs.) of bread (500 grammes of black and 300 grammes of white), 20 grammes (less than an ounce) of sugar and a supply of soap for washing and laundry. Sugar and soap should have been issued every 10 days. Every month the prisoners were entitled to 5 packets of tobacco, 5 boxes of matches, 5 packets of cigarette paper and a ration of tea. Every day they should have received a hot meal, containing the prescribed amount of particular ingredients per person. In practice these rules were not adhered to.

The food provided for prisoners in the Kozielsk camp corresponded more or less to the "normal" prisoners' diet in Soviet labor and correction camps before the outbreak of war between the U. S. S. R. and Germany. In one respect the Kozielsk camp differed considerably from "normal camps"—in that, that not everybody was forced to work.

According to the camp regulations, all officers under 60 years of age should in principle be used inside the camp for manual tasks connected with the upkeep and running of it. These regulations were not always observed, because parties of officers were sometimes sent outside the camp to dig peat, load barley, wheat, salt and cement into trucks, carry coal, etc.

When the officers drew attention to international conventions and to the regulations posted up in the camp, the "regulations" were removed. In order to encourage the prisoners to go willingly to work outside the camp, a special "reward" was promised them in the form of a third helping of soup daily. On an average between 100 and 500 out of 5,000 prisoners went to work outside the camp each day. Conditions were particularly hard in winter on account of the lack of clothing and footwear. Many of the prisoners wore summer uniforms, not even possessing an overcoat. Only a few of the prisoners were supplied with Soviet winter suits lined with cotton wool. Others had been able to buy overcoats and warm clothes from the privates who were released. But this did not increase the numbers willing to work outside the camp as everyone was anxious to preserve their clothes, which were quickly ruined by hard manual labour.

15. *Kozielsk II. F. Prisoners appreciation of their legal situation and discussions with the camp authorities.*

As mentioned above (see pages 6–12) Polish soldiers did not realise that their own situation and legal status were affected by the Soviet "legal interpretations" of the dissolution of the Polish State. Most of them considering themselves to be ordinary prisoners of war, invoked the conventions and standards of international law.

The comparatively large number of distinguished lawyers in the camp supplied their fellow prisoners with arguments to be used in discussions with the camp authorities.

The most far-reaching argument was put forward by the officers of the Pinsk¹ flotilla, who had been in September 1939 officially negotiating with the Soviet military authorities in Kostopol for permission to evacuate Polish soldiers and their

¹ The town in Eastern Poland on Pripet river.

families to neutral countries. They received at that time the assurance of a Soviet Colonel that the life and property of the personnel of the Naval Headquarters of the Pinsk Flotilla and their families would be protected, that officers willing to work would eventually be given employment and that the remainder would be set free. This verbal "agreement" shared the fate of the terms of the Lwow capitulation (see page 10), and 26 officers of the Pinsk Flotilla found themselves in the Kozielsk camp. Here they reopened "negotiations", explaining to the camp authorities that, in the absence of a state of war between Poland and the Soviet Union, Polish servicemen could not be kept in captivity and treated as prisoners of war, but should be given their freedom and the right to leave the U. S. S. R. According to one of the officers, the higher Soviet officials' reply to this argument was that, as the Poles were resisting Soviet troops, they would have to take the consequences; lower officials—said the same officer,—“did not conceal the fact that they regarded us as enemies of the people, representatives of a hated caste”. (Witness No. 4.)¹

Polish doctors, not questioning the general right of the Soviet authorities to retain captured Polish combatants in prisoner of war camps, handed to the camp authorities a special petition, signed by over 300 of them, calling attention to the international conventions and regulations regarding medical personnel and asking to be sent back to Poland in order to help the people there who were deprived of medical attention. This petition had no effect, nor did the protests of several doctors against the heavy physical work and cleaning of latrines which they were forced to carry out in common with the other prisoners. The protesting doctors, having appealed to the generally accepted standards of the civilized world, received from representatives of the camp authorities the laconic reply that bourgeois rules were not observed in the Soviet state.

Mr. Pohorecki, President of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Polish Codification Commission, pointed out, in a conversation with General Zarubin, that he had no connection with the services or with any military organization and asked on what legal grounds civilians were detained by the Soviet authorities in prisoner of war camps. From the usually very polite Soviet General he received the harsh reply that Mr. Pohorecki must finally understand that, to the Soviet authorities, the fact that he was President of the Supreme Court of a bourgeois state was quite sufficient ground for keeping him in prison.

16. Kozielsk II. G. Investigations.

It can be seen from the above examples that, although in some respects the inmates of the Kozielsk camp were treated as prisoners of war, in reality the Soviet authorities regarded them rather as political criminals (See pages 6-12). As the severity of the "punishment" depended on the degree of "guilt" and "social danger" of each individual, so both of these factors had to be established during the period of confinement in the Kozielsk camp.

This was in theory the reason for the "interrogation" of Kozielsk prisoners by numerous members of the N. K. V. D. Investigation Branch over a period of nearly six months. Officers who survived Kozielsk emphasise that to the great astonishment of the prisoners—who were never able to understand their "legal position"—these interrogations were by no means normal interrogations of prisoners of war, confined to purely military information, but were rather of a political and social character, of the kind usually employed in the case of persons accused of grave political crimes.

Each of the interrogated prisoners were accused of the "crime" of serving in "bourgeois" Forces and taking part in the "world counter-revolution" against the Soviet Union. The interrogations were further used to discover which of the prisoners were "qualified criminals"; these were the people who had taken part in the Polish-Soviet war of 1920, the officers of the Intelligence Service and Military Frontier Guard and people engaged in anti-communist activities, particularly those who, in the opinion of the interrogators, were working for the "separation of the White Russian and Ukrainian Republics from the Soviet Union".

The Soviet authorities held that the degree of "social danger" depended on the social position, standard of living and family conditions of the "criminals", and was affected by their political outlook, which party, if any, they were members of, and their attitude towards, and relations with the communist party and the Soviet regime. The interrogators were therefore interested in all these questions and during the "investigations" tried to provoke discussions on general political and social subjects. In accordance with Soviet policy at that time, the inter-

¹ For the personal security of the witnesses and their families, their names are not given. The names are known to the author.

rogators' attitude was openly pro-German, anti-French and particularly anti-British. They threw blame for the outbreak of war exclusively on Great Britain, who, they alleged, had made Poland the excuse for attacking Germany. Towards Poland the interrogators took a very disparaging attitude, constantly affirming that "there is not and never will be a Poland", and consistently qualifying all references to Poland, her Forces, Government etc. with the word "former".¹

In accordance with the established methods of "Soviet investigations", the interrogation of prisoners began with a demand for an exact account of the interrogated person's life history. The interrogations usually took place at night and continued for many hours without pause, often dragging on far into the next day. As at all Soviet investigations, the interrogations were often repeated several times and the same questions put in different contexts, with the object of disclosing any divergence in the answers. Not knowing the methods of Soviet investigators, the Kozielsk prisoners were amazed at the repeated interrogations on the same subjects and thought this was due to new orders from Moscow about the form and method of interrogation.

Beating and other physical means of compulsion were not used during the interrogations at Kozielsk to extort "true evidence" from the prisoners. The interrogators confined themselves to shouting and threats. If it was considered that stronger methods would produce the desired results, the persons concerned were removed from Kozielsk to other more isolated spots, which were more suitable for the "highest degree" of interrogation.

The official protocols of the interrogations were given to the prisoners to sign and then put in their "personal dossiers" (a form of records normally kept only in criminal investigations). Added to them were photographs of the prisoners (in profile and full face), taken in the Kozielsk camp, as well as their finger prints.

17. Kozielsk II. H. Additional material for investigations—prisoners' correspondence with families and people abroad.

As the purpose of the "investigations" was to produce the most exact "analysis" from every angle of each individual prisoner, in addition to the official protocol of their evidence, signed in each case by the prisoner concerned, various other material collected during the investigations was also attached to their personal documents, such as:

- a) reports of the camp authorities.
- b) Soviet officials' records of "private" conversations with prisoners.
- c) evidence of fellow prisoners and of "civilian criminals" arrested by the Soviet authorities in Poland.
- d) extracts from Polish documents acquired by the occupation authorities, as well as articles and works published in Poland by or about the interrogated person.
- e) extracts from biographical data published in Polish or foreign encyclopaedias and publications of the "Who's Who" type.
- f) letters from and to relations, friends, etc.

In order to obtain this additional material for the investigations, the camp authorities resorted to special "roundabout methods", one of which was to permit and even encourage the Kozielsk prisoners to correspond with their families and friends in Poland and abroad. The letters to and from the prisoners, which passed through the camp censorship, undoubtedly could and did supply extremely valuable material for the cases against them.

At the end of November 1939, the prisoners were informed that once a month they could send letters through the camp authorities to persons residing in the Soviet Union or abroad. Prisoners were forbidden to write about themselves, the fact that they were prisoners of war and in a prison camp, or of what they saw and heard there; but they were permitted to write about their own health and ask for news of their families and personal affairs (Witness No. 3). It should be emphasised that prisoners detained at Kozielsk were not forbidden to mention in letters to their families the names of fellow-prisoners and friends who were with them in the camp.

The prisoners were instructed to give their address as: Kozielsk, Province of Smolensk, Post Box No. 12. Some of the letters from the camp were stamped "Gorki Rest House".

¹ When one of the Kozielsk prisoners was put under arrest for contributing to the paper published in the camp and for organising discussions, this fact was announced in the camp orders for the information of all prisoners in approximately the following words: "The former Lt. Colonel Chalacinski of the former Polish Army has been sentenced to 10 days arrest for patriotic activity on behalf of the former Poland."

In this connection the question arose of payment for stamps. Polish service-men captured by the Soviets naturally had no Soviet money, and the Soviet authorities did not recognise Polish money, of which some officers had large sums.

Likewise; the foreign currency (dollars, francs, pounds) which a few of the prisoners possessed could not be exchanged, and if it was found when the prisoners were searched it was taken away to be "deposited" or simply confiscated. Since, therefore, none of the prisoners possessed any Soviet currency to pay for stamps, it was impossible for them to send their letters. As every prisoner was anxious to send news of himself to his family and to find out what happened to them, agitation and despair reigned in the camp on account of the lack of roubles. Demands for roubles were made under the international conventions, concerning the payment of P. O. W.s, but these were refused. General Zarubin however informed a special delegation of prisoners that roubles for stamps could be obtained by selling to the Soviet authorities personal possessions of any value which the prisoners had concealed when they were searched. In a short time, representatives of the Soviet Jewelry Trust arrived at the camp to buy, at fixed prices, watches, fountain pens, automatic pencils etc. In this way the prisoners obtained the much desired roubles and were able to send their letters.

Between November 1939 and April 1940, each prisoner at Kozielsk sent 2-5 letters to his family, thereby facilitating the Soviet authorities' task in formulating a case against himself. In many cases, when sending news to their families, prisoners were compelled to reveal their real names and other personal details to the camp authorities instead of the pseudonyms and false addresses which they had at first given. The authorities also obtained valuable information concerning officers' families, frequently hiding in Soviet-occupied Poland, in order to avoid the common fate of such families—deportation to the East.

The prisoners' families, happy to get their first, and, as they thought, good news of their relations, did not limit themselves in the number of letters they sent to the camp. They wrote often and, in spite of their caution in the actual wording, unconsciously supplied the investigating authorities with valuable information regarding the family and social environment of the prisoners concerned, the moral of members of the family etc. As all correspondence was strictly censored, many prisoners were summoned to special "chats" on account of the contents of letters they had received.

In general the Soviet authorities regarded the maintenance of any relations with foreign countries with great suspicion, considering it a proof of contact with foreign intelligence services. Another form of provocation must therefore be recognized in the granting of permission (as from January 1940) to write letters abroad. Prisoners were encouraged to do this by vague suggestions, that they may possibly be allowed to leave the Soviet Union for neutral countries.

In addition to official interrogations and the "discussions" on general political and social subjects provoked during these interrogations, during the whole period of their detention in the camp the prisoners were carefully observed by numerous N. K. V. D. personnel and in particular by the so-called "politruks" (political officers). Many of them engaged individual prisoners in "friendly conversations", showed them small marks of favour and assured them of their personal friendship and sympathy, thereby attempting to win their confidence and establish a certain intimacy. Every unguarded word spoken during such conversations was carefully noted and often had far-reaching consequences.

In order to obtain detailed reports of conversations among the prisoners themselves, the camp authorities recruited agents from among the inmates. This recruiting took place either during official interrogations or in connection with attempts to organise communistic propaganda among the prisoners. The small success of this propaganda in the first months of captivity was to a certain extent connected with the fact, that few prisoners were willing to spy upon their comrades. But, from among five thousand people the Bolsheviks were obviously able to recruit several individuals for their secret service.

18. Kozielsk II. I. Communist propaganda and its effects.

Attempts to spread communist propaganda among the Kozielsk prisoners were closely connected with the cultural life and social activities organised by the camp authorities.

On arrival at the camp, officers were immediately confronted with a large placard on which several articles of the "Stalin Constitution" were written in Polish. These articles guaranteed to Soviet citizens "civil rights and privileges unknown in bourgeois countries". Amongst others, Article 124 of the Constitution was quoted, which stated that "freedom of worship and freedom to engage in anti-religious propaganda is allowed to every citizen".

In the camp there was a special club building, equipped with a film projector and screen, a library, half-broken piano, a few old billiard tables, chess and draught boards. But, as the club room was not heated during the hard winter of 1939-40, it was not very much frequented by the prisoners. Only the films shown there several times a week attracted a large number of people. They were exclusively Soviet films, spreading communist propaganda, mostly old and worn out. Once during the showing of an anti-religious film a considerable part of the audience, whose religious feelings were outraged, left the room as a demonstration. After that the doors were locked during performances. While the prisoners were at Kozielsk, Soviet entertainers from Smolensk once or twice appeared on the stage of the club.

The camp library was not well stocked. It consisted exclusively of Russian books—political propaganda and fiction. The better works of Soviet literature were few in number, and most of the fiction was didactic propaganda.

Every ten days or so a "travelling bookstall" called at the club. Here, too, political propaganda pamphlets predominated. Current political news was heard from loudspeakers installed in the camp which did not always work properly. A few copies of the Soviet newspapers, "Pravda" and "Izviestia" were available. From time to time the camp authorities provided a communist newspaper in Polish entitled "Głos Radziecki" (The Voice of the Soviet), but it was not popular among the prisoners, if only because of the excruciatingly bad Polish, often difficult to understand.

From time to time the camp "politruks" (political officers) arranged talks devoted chiefly to the excellence of the Soviet regime, its achievements in the cultural and economic field, and to the rottenness and decadence of bourgeois states, particularly Poland, which was always qualified by the adjective "former", as mentioned above. At first these talks were boycotted by the majority of prisoners, sometimes the audience heckled the speaker and provoked discussions, but in the end they resigned themselves to listening with the thought that the "lecturers" were paid for their work and had to say what they were told.

19. Kozielsk II. *J. Religious, cultural and social life at Kozielsk.*

With a few exceptions, the morale of the prisoners at Kozielsk appeared to be good. Firmly believing in the ultimate victory of justice and trusting implicitly in Poland's Western Allies, the prisoners hoped for a quick release from Soviet captivity and the granting of facilities either to return to Poland or to make their way through a neutral state to join the forces fighting in the West.¹

Regarding their captivity as bitter but temporary necessity, the prisoners did everything in their power to organise their life on the best possible lines, showing great initiative and ingenuity.

Soon after their arrival at the camp, having seen the quotations from the "Stalin Constitution" painted on enormous placards (see page 38) the prisoners began to put crucifixes in the rooms and organised morning and evening prayers. The camp authorities, amazed at this, explained to the people concerned that although Article 124 of the constitution allows "freedom of worship" to all citizens. Article 126 of the Russian penal code forbids "the holding of religious services in any state or social institution or establishment and the placing of any kind of religious statues or effigies in such an institution or establishment".

As in practice the penal code takes precedence over the "Stalin Constitution", prisoners in the camp, which was a "state institution", were denied "freedom of worship". Nevertheless the religious life of the prisoners flourished in secret.

While there were a considerable number of priests in the camp (see pages 22-22) they celebrated Mass in strict secrecy, in the presence of relatively small groups of trusted prisoners, and were generally very active. "The celebrating of Mass by our prisoner priests, who also heard the prisoners' confessions, had to be carried out in secret, as in the catacombs in Rome" (Witness No. 5). "Father Wojtyniak, Chancellor of the Polish Council of Bishops, once celebrated Mass with a host given him by a Soviet citizen, also a Catholic priest" (Witness No. 9). These activities caused the camp authorities, who had their "eyes and ears" among the prisoners, to take reprisals against the priests and finally led to the removal of all priests from Kozielsk. During their detention at Kozielsk, lasting less than

¹ A rumour circulated in the camp that General Zarubin himself had said to one of the prisoners. "You have too many protectors, so you cannot go". The prisoners interpreted this remark as meaning that Britain and France did not want them to be returned to German-occupied Poland, as they were anxious to get them to the West. It was even said that Britain had asked the Soviets to send the Poles to the West and had offered to pay the expenses of their detention in Russia and that the Soviets were bargaining over the price. Rumours of this kind, which made the prisoners feel that they were an object of concern to the outside world helped considerably to keep up morale in the camp.

two months, three priests were sentenced to camp arrest for performing religious practices.

In spite of the removal of priests from the camp just before Christmas, the prisoners made every effort to hold the feast in the traditional Polish manner. Dr. Wroczynski, as the head of a "kitchen" commission, officially approached General Zarubin with the request that a Christmas Eve supper be arranged for the prisoners, with courses of fried fish and imitation Christmas cakes in the form of sweet, white bread. Although according to camp rules prisoners were entitled to sugar and white bread, the "cake" suggestion was rejected by General Zarubin on the grounds that sweet bread was too expensive for the camp. But fried fish was provided for the prisoners on Christmas Eve—for breakfast. They kept it until evening, and ate it rather gloomily and dejectedly when the first star appeared. After supper, Christmas carols were sung in all the living quarters, frequently interrupted by the arrival of representatives of the camp authorities, trying to discover the initiators of this breach of the Soviet penal code. For making a speech in one of the largest residential blocks on the meaning of Christmas and the need for endurance, Lt. Colonel Chalacinski was condemned to 14 days close arrest.

A similar punishment was inflicted on the "senior" of hut No. 10, Major Skoczyski, who, together with the well-known Polish writer Jim Poker, started a "publication" devoted to camp life and affairs, a literary and informative paper of a satirical nature entitled "The Pavilion X Bulletin". The editors succeeded in bringing out several handwritten numbers of this paper, which was a great success among the prisoners, passing from hand to hand until, after special investigations by the camp authorities, publication ceased with Major Skoczyski's arrest.

It should be emphasized that the Kozielsk prisoners were forced by necessity to adopt conspiratorial methods. At first they tried to organise their cultural life with the knowledge and approval of the Soviet camp authorities. During their first months at Kozielsk they requested permission to organise amongst themselves, in the camp club, courses in foreign languages and popular lectures and discussions. Although there were among the prisoners a considerable number of people with a good knowledge of Western European languages and even some professional language teachers, the camp authorities, after a great deal of talk about the difficulties of organising well run courses, did not agree to instruction being given by the prisoners themselves. Instead they promised to arrange for courses to be organised by Soviet specialists who would be brought to the camp for this purpose. The final outcome was that no official courses in foreign languages were arranged at Kozielsk, so the prisoners were forced to arrange for secret instruction in small groups.

The Soviet authorities attitude to the lectures, which were to have been delivered in the first instance by professors of Polish universities and colleges interned in the camp, was different. In principle they did not refuse their consent to these lectures, but stipulated that the text of every proposed lecture should be previously handed to them in writing, so that they could send it to Moscow and obtain the approval of the central authorities. As in practice this procedure eliminated the possibility of holding lectures officially, negotiations with the camp authorities were discontinued. Instead, unofficial "chats" were held almost daily in different huts. To avoid endangering speakers and audiences, the subjects chosen for discussion were as far as possible non-political.

On the whole the prisoners were optimistic about their future. Not realising their situation nor treating seriously the investigations conducted by the camp authorities and the threats uttered during these investigations, they hoped to leave the camp and the U. S. S. R. before long and go either to the West, to continue the fight against Germany, or home to Poland. Various statements and incidents seemed to indicate the probability of their departure in the near future. The camp authorities were said to be drawing up a list of prisoners according to the provinces in which they lived, so as to sort them out for the journey; the convoy had apparently arrived; apparently, too, the railway carriages were already waiting at the station. When, therefore, the final decisions as to the fate of the prisoners had at last been taken, either on the strength of the particulars collected at the investigations or of these data, and the camp authorities started the liquidation of the camp, the prisoners were not surprised.

20. Kozielsk II. K. *Liquidation of the officers' camp at Kozielsk.*

For some time the numbers in the Kozielsk camp had been slowly diminishing. At the end of December 1939, a group of priests was taken away (see pages 22-23), and a few weeks later about twenty Polish officers of Georgian origin were also removed.

Then, in March 1940 over a hundred other ranks, who had remained there from the first period, left, among them about 20-30 cadet officers. At least some of them were really set free and sent home. Also officers were taken away singly or in small groups as a result of the facts brought to light during the interrogations or revealed in letters and conversations.

In talking with prisoners, representatives of the camp authorities emphasised the necessity of evacuating the camp in view of the overcrowded conditions and danger of epidemics.

When the official evacuation from Kozielsk was begun at the beginning of April 1940, all the prisoners were convinced that they were going to Poland. This theory was semi-officially confirmed by representatives of the camp authorities. The Commandant's adjutant for instance, N. K. V. D. Captain Alexandrowitch, asked by one of the prisoners where they were being taken, answered: "To the West, nearer home". To another prisoner (Witness No. 2) the same officer said that, at a specified point on the "frontier" between Soviet and German "spheres of interest", his camera, hitherto deposited with the camp authorities, would be returned to him.

On the strength of these rumours spread by camp officials, an atmosphere of joyous excitement reigned among the prisoners. Only a few individuals had disquieting premonitions. There was further some apprehension among the prisoners from Soviet-occupied Poland who were afraid that on leaving the camp and returning home they would lose the immunity accorded them by international law as P. O. W.s and that consequently the local Soviet authorities would "deal with them in their own way".

The evacuation which began on 3.4.40 was carried out in the following way. In the morning, an N. K. V. D. official went through all the huts, with a list, from which he read out the names of all those who were to leave that day, instructing them to report immediately at the club building, taking with them all their possessions. In the club another list of departing prisoners was drawn up. Prisoners gave up all government property issued to them in the camp, and having been supplied with food for the journey were taken to a special hut, No. 21, for examination of belongings. After that they were immediately conducted out of the camp grounds and loaded into lorries, transported to a railway siding near Kozielsk station and transferred into railway trucks.

The departure of the fourth group, which included 3 Generals (Minkiewicz, Bohatyrewicz and Smorawinski) and several other senior officers, was marked by a special celebration. The camp authorities held a farewell reception after which officers remaining in the camp formed a guard of honour and cheered the departing officers, who left the camp in high spirits, saying that they hoped those remaining behind would soon follow them.

Bread and herrings were supplied as provisions for the journey, wrapped in clean, white paper, which, in itself cause a considerable sensation. The effect was increased by the fact, that the officials examining their belongings wore clean white aprons and did not conduct the search very thoroughly. A slightly puzzling phenomenon was the fact that officers supposedly being transported to "freedom" were conducted from the camp by a strong escort (armed and accompanied by dogs); but this was put down to the common tendency to exaggerate everything, found in the U. S. S. R. and the transport commanders' fear of their being responsible if they "lost" one of their charges, for all whom they had had to sign a receipt.

Each convoy was composed of persons individually picked by the Soviet authorities. The prisoners tried in vain to discover the principles governing the choice of people to be removed from the camp. During the six months spent at Kozielsk, all possible particulars had been taken many times; rank, profession, education, knowledge of foreign languages and countries, place of birth, permanent residence etc. But the selection was not based on any of these. "Ranks were just as mixed as were occupations and domiciles", stated Witness 6. The realisation of this fact by the prisoners gave rise to a certain anxiety among them, since they began to doubt the truth of the theory that they were being taken away from Kozielsk to be freed, or exchanged for Polish prisoners in German hands. The camp authorities, when questioned about this, explained that the sorting out of prisoners according to their permanent domiciles would take place later in special transit camps, to which prisoners from Kozielsk would first be taken. The intervals of several days which sometimes occurred between the departure of convoys was explained by the temporary over-crowding of these camps.

The prisoners observing that the same N. K. V. D. men frequently escorted consecutive convoys, came to the conclusion that these "transit camps" could not be very distant from Kozielsk.

Anxious for details of the fate awaiting them, those remaining behind in the camp asked departing prisoners to leave some indication as to their destination in the railway trucks for the benefit of the next party.

As the composition of each convoy appeared to be settled at random, some of the prisoners tried to arrange not to be separated from their friends and relations. The camp authorities, however, refused to comply with their requests, saying that they did not influence the composition of the lists, which were drawn up by the central authorities in Moscow. The prisoners did not believe this, and ironically remarked that the lists were more likely to have been "drawn up by a parrot."

Doubts as to whether departure from Kozielsk really meant freedom were increased by rumours circulating in the camp to the effect that later convoys were treated in a less "elegant" manner than the fourth and other early convoys, that escorts were treating the prisoners very severely, even brutally, and that either during an inspection or whilst being put into a lorry, one of the prisoners had been bayoneted and so on. In spite of these rumours by the end of April the 200 or more prisoners whose names had been consistently omitted from the lists became very dejected: "Those left behind were concentrated in one corner of the camp, in block No. 10. Silence and boredom reigned in the camp . . . The only staff officer left was Admiral Czernicki, who lived in one room with Major Kopeck, a doctor. We were depressed because we were still there. But one of the Soviet officials whispered to a prisoner: "Do not complain. The later you go the more thankful you should be." (Witness 6.) This remark at once spread throughout the block.

After an interval of nearly two weeks, convoys began to leave again. On May 10th about fifty prisoners were taken away, probably one truck-load. On May 11th, Vice-Admiral Czernicki left with a similar batch of officers. On the evening of the same day, hut No. 10 was separated by barbed wire from the rest of the camp. About 100 prisoners who remained in this hut, thinking that they were specially ill-treated by the Soviet authorities, were "extremely depressed." (Witness 6.)

On the following day, May 12th, 1940, these remaining prisoners were awakened at 7. a. m. and ordered to get ready for a journey. All were to leave but nine prisoners, whose names were read out from a special list. When this convoy had left, the officers' camp at Kozielsk (Kozielsk II) was liquidated.

The convoys were removed from Kozielsk in April 1940, in the following order:—

Table of convoys which left Kozielsk in April and May 1940

3rd April-----	62 (74)	men including among others.	J. Niemezynski, Wojciechowski.
4th "-----	302 (342)	ditto-----	
5th "-----	280	ditto-----	Fryga, Burdzinski, Westerski, Woloszyn
7th "-----	92 (110)	ditto-----	Gen. J. Minkiewicz, Gen. Smorawinski Gen. Bohatyrewicz, Col. A. Stefanowski, Major A. Soliski.
8th "-----	277	ditto-----	W. Kruk, Zalasik.
9th "-----	270		
11th "-----	290	ditto-----	W. Wajda, B. Wajs, Boguslawski, Przygodzinski, Iwanusko, Prof. Pienkowski, O. Ulrichs, S. Skupien.
12th "-----	204	ditto-----	Kotecki, Ochocki.
15th "-----	150	ditto-----	Col L. Pawlikowski, Bilewski.
16th "-----	420	ditto-----	Comdr. L. Moszczenski, Capt. S. Trojanowski, Znajdowski, Soltan.
17th "-----	294	ditto-----	Lt. J. Roguszczyk, Liliental, Majewski.
19th "-----	304	ditto-----	J. Jozwiak, J. Handy, B. Leitgeber, Rumianka, Domania, Rzaewski.
20th "-----	344	ditto-----	L. Kowalewicz, Prausa, Jablonski, Prof. Morawski, Paciorkowski.
21st "-----	240	ditto-----	Dr. J. Jakubowicz, Capt. J. Trepiak.
22nd "-----	120	ditto-----	J. Ziecina.
26th "-----	150	ditto-----	(All sent to Pavlishtehv Bor and Gria zovietz—see below).
27th "-----	200		
29th "-----	300		Prof. S. Swianiewicz, Dr. Tucholski, Lt. M. Zoltowski, Lt. Korowajczyk.
Total approx--	4,309		

In May 1940 the last three convoys left Kozielsk.

10th May, approx-----	50 men.
11th May, "-----	50 "
12th May, "-----	95 "
Total approx-----	195

(The figures are based either on the reports of men who survived (in case the reports do not agree with each other, the figures are added in brackets) or on the notes, diaries etc. found on bodies discovered in mass-graves at Katyn. The figures based on reports, being based mainly on memory of reporting men, should not be taken as completely accurate).

Out of those convoys totalling 4,504 men only the one which left Kozielsk on April 26th (150 men), one removed on May 12th, (95 men) and a few people detached from various convoys en route, have been found at the camps of Pavlishtchev Bor and Giazovietz (see below p. 113) also a diagram at the end of PART ONE). The remaining number approximately 4,249 officers and men have not been accounted for at all.

22. *Kozielsk III (July 1940-June 1941). Camp for former Polish internees from Lithuania, Latvia. A. General description.*

At the time of the U. S. S. R.'s move against Poland and the occupation of the province of Wilno by the Red Army, most of the few Polish troops in that area and some detachments which had been opposing the Soviet armies in the neighbourhood of Grodno, crossed the Lithuanian frontier and were interned by the Lithuanians. A very small number of Polish units in the North of Wilno province retreated into Latvia. During the winter of 1939/40 the remainder of the Polish troops who had been carrying on for some months a "little war" against the Soviet occupiers in the areas of Wilno, Grodno and Suwalki, also went to Lithuania.

In the neutral Baltic States Polish soldiers were disarmed and interned in various camps; where they were treated as combatants of a belligerent State. The interned Poles escaped en masse either to join the Polish Army in France, or to return home to Poland. A certain number were officially released from internment on grounds of ill-health, or for other reasons. Consequently the number of Poles interned in the Baltic States was greatly reduced, falling from more than 10,000 in the autumn of 1939 to less than 5,000 at the beginning of 1940.

When in June 1940, the Red Army occupied the Baltic States, the deportation of interned Poles to the interior of Russia began even before the official "incorporation" of Lithuania and Latvia into the U. S. S. R. One of the places to which these deportees were sent was the Kozielsk camp, which had been emptied of Polish prisoners of war in the middle of May.

On 13.7.40 interned officers from Kalwaria Suwalska were brought to Kozielsk. Subsequently, at varying intervals up to the end of August, 1940, more convoys arrived there. They were composed of officers from Latvia, cadet officers, N. C. Os. a few privates (mostly Military Police) and members of the civil police force (officers and men) interned in Lithuania and Latvia. A certain number of civilian Poles interned in Latvia were also brought there.

After the arrival of these "internees" at Kozielsk, the Soviet authorities immediately set themselves to discover which of them had been officers in the Intelligence Service, senior police officers and "partisans" operating against the Red Army since September 1939. These, together with a dozen or more persons also accused of special "crimes" against the Soviet, were removed from the camp, presumably to prison.

During the autumn and winter months of 1940 a few Polish officers who had been up till this time in Soviet prisons, were brought to Kozielsk and the cadet officers, N. C. Os. and the majority of privates capable of work were taken away. On October 11th General Przedziecki and 20 officers, apparently chosen at random, were removed from the camp. After all these transfers there were in the camp about 2,500 men, mostly police, about 800 Army officers few hundred cadet officers and other ranks and some dozen civilians.

When these Polish internees arrived at Kozielsk they found that the previous inmates had left many inscriptions in Polish on the doors, windows and walls; in particular the dates of departure of the various groups of prisoners from Kozielsk were discovered on the walls of the kitchen. This calendar ended on 10.5.40, beside which date a sentence, similar to the following was written: "To-day the last group of 100 officers left. Direction unknown."

Some of the N. K. V. D. staff from the preceding period were still there and continued to carry out their duties. The most important role in Kozielsk III was played by 1st Lieutenant Dymidowitch of the N. K. V. D., who was in charge of the so-called "politruks" (political officers).

In the first weeks after their arrival at Kozielsk the internees were summoned to the camp headquarters where the N. K. V. D. political officers made detailed notes of their particulars. These particulars were afterwards "supplemented" in the course of additional interrogations (called in Russian doprosy). In contrast to the "interrogations" of the officers in the preceding period, these interro-

gations were in the nature of attempts of individual communist propaganda with the object of recruiting adherents and agents by means of a clever combination of discussions and threats, rather than proper investigations.

Simultaneously with the individual propaganda which took place during the "supplementing of evidence", general communist propaganda was carried out in the camp through "cultural and educational" activities.

The internees were supplied with a considerable number of communist newspapers published both in Russian and in Polish. In 1941, there appeared in the camp a large number of copies of "Nowe Widnokregi" (New Horizon), a literary and social monthly paper, which Wanda Wasilewska had started to publish in Lwow¹ as an organ of the Union of Soviet Writers.

23. Kozielsk III. B. Work—Liquidation.

Although the Kozielsk internees were not in general forces to work, only staff officers were officially exempt. Junior officers had to look after themselves and keep their living quarters clean and tidy. Internees from the ranks and from the police force were seldom employed outside the precincts of the camp.

In the spring of 1941 the Soviet authorities decided to make use of the internees for public work. At the end of April and the beginning of May all privates and policemen fit for work left Kozielsk in two convoys.

These convoys went North to the White Sea, from whence the men were shipped to the Kola peninsula. There the internees were employed on building roads and aerodromes in the area of the river Ponoi. After the outbreak of the Russian-German war, they were brought back to the Central Russia and put into camps at Talitza and Yugov and subsequently handed over to the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. (see following pages). Reports of these movements of former inmates of Kozielsk reached the Polish Embassy in Kuybysheve and gave rise to the belief, held for a certain time in Polish circles, that *prisoners of war* from Kozielsk Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been deported to the far north of Russia. (See PART TWO.)

The officers and comparatively small number of other ranks and policemen, considered Soviet authorities as unfit for work, remained at Kozielsk until 29.6.41, when they were loaded into trucks and transferred in one convoy to the N. K. V D. camp at Griazovietz, near Vologda.

24. Fate of prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk II, (namely October 1939–May 1940 Officers' P. O. W. Camp). A. General observations.

Owing to the disappearance of 97% of the Polish officers from Kozielsk II, there was a long time no real evidence as to their fate after deportation from Kozielsk.

Only the people from two convoys which left Kozielsk on 26.4.40 and 12.5.40 appeared again as it was previously told. From the remaining convoys very few individuals survived, and these can only give information about the fate of the rest of the people in the convoy up to the moment when they were separated from them. The rest of their report concerns only their own individual experiences. As Polish prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk were treated as prisoners and transported in special prison trucks, with compartments carefully isolated from each other, the information gleaned by anyone individual about his fellow prisoners was necessarily very fragmentary. They knew only what happened in their own compartment up to the time of their leaving the convoy. It is difficult for them to give any information even about what was happening in neighbouring compartments. Moreover, trucks could be detached and sent to a different destination or individuals could be taken out of a compartment without the knowledge of someone in another truck or compartment.

In the absence of detailed information about the greater part of the convoys, a full account will be given below of the experiences of those who were in the convoys of 26.4. and 12.5.40, and fragmentary reports of the fate of other convoys.

These reports will also provide an illustration of the treatment generally accorded to Polish officers by the Soviet authorities. Although these officers reappeared after a couple of years and managed to leave the U. S. S. R. there is every reason for thinking that the treatment and final fate of the other officers was, if anything, worse.

When, in 1943, the Germans revealed the existence of the ill-famous Katyn graves, officials of the Polish Red Cross, were permitted to assist at the exhumation of the bodies (See PART THREE). As some of these officials were connected with the Underground Movement, the Polish Government in London were able to

¹ South-Eastern Poland, occupied by U. S. S. R. in 1939.

acquire some of the documents (original or copies) which were found on the corpses. Among these were diaries in which the experiences of the prisoners after leaving Kozielsk had been recorded. The fact that these diaries record detailed descriptions of everyday life, at Kozielsk, which are in complete accord with the descriptions given by surviving officers is an undeniable proof of their authenticity.

25. B. Experiences of prisoners of war deported from Kozielsk II, before the liquidation of the camp was begun.

It has already been mentioned that some officers were deported from Kozielsk, either singly or in small groups before the liquidation of the camp was begun in April, 1940. The fate of these individuals after leaving Kozielsk varied in detail but was fundamentally the same; prisons and "interrogations," "sentences" and their execution.

A description will be given of the experiences of those officers who were removed from Kozielsk on 8.3.40, without reference to the fate of the officers taken away singly from Kozielsk, or to that of the group of the Army chaplains who left on 23.12.39 or of the group of Polish officers of Georgian origin removed in the middle of January, 1940.

In the evening of 8.3.40 soldiers of the camp guard began to collect officers from various huts, whose names were on a short list. After these people had been identified by "seniors", the N. K. V. D. soldiers ordered them to collect their possessions immediately and pushed them singly and in a brutal manner to the camp administration building. Here the prisoners were rather superficially searched and all state property was taken away from them. In groups of two or three, each group escorted by two N. K. V. D. men armed with revolvers, they were conducted to the railway station about 8 miles distant. As the temperature was minus 20 degrees centigrade it was difficult to march, laden, along the dark, rough paths, covered with frozen and slippery snow, particularly as the guards were constantly prodding the prisoners on. When an old retired colonel began obviously to lose his strength, the guards shoved him brutally on, abusing the "officer of the White Guard," who "cannot walk now, but was last year able to march with the troops opposing the Red Army" and jeeringly urged the "old warrior" to regain his feet and hurry to his "little wife," whom he would see tomorrow.

On arriving at the station after a very rapid march, the prisoners were locked into a prison truck in the same groups of two or three, each group in a separate compartment. One of the prisoners described the prison truck in these words: "The Bolsheviks' official name for such a truck is 'saka' (abbreviation for 'Sakluchenny,' i. e. imprisoned). The truck which is of 'Pullman' type has windows, covered by an iron grid on the corridor side only. Doors lead from the corridor to widowless compartments and subcompartments. In addition to the iron bars, these compartments can also be closed by iron doors, which, when shut, exclude all light. The corridor is constantly patrolled by armed soldiers of an N. K. V. D. escort, young men recently conscripted, all members of the 'Komsomol' (Communist Youth Organisation), and political fanatics who often treat the prisoners ruthlessly and cover them with abuse.

The N. K. V. D. Lieutenant in charge of the convoy was not unpolite to the prisoners, some of whom were still under the delusion that, they were being liberated and "sent home" in exchange for prisoners in German hands. But to the more realistic ones the journey in prison trucks with a strong escort rather suggested that they were regarded as "important criminals" on their way to jail.

As the loaded truck remained stationary at Kozielsk for the best part of 24 hours, before it was hitched to a goods train, the rapid march to the station was quite unnecessary. After travelling for three days, during which time the train was more often standing in stations than moving, the prisoners having travelled only about 130 miles arrived at Smolensk. Here at some distance from the station they were unloaded from the truck and formed into ranks. One of the guards ordered them to march in formation, without speaking to each other or to any passer-by, to look straight ahead and not to break ranks, threatening, that if anyone took even half a step sideways this would be regarded as an attempt to escape and the guards would open fire immediately. After crossing the railway yards, the prisoners were halted in front of a closed gate, leading on to a road, and were ordered to kneel down in the deep, dirty snow. After a few minutes a black, closed bus arrived and the prisoners were ordered to stand up in turn and get into the bus.

The bus was specially designed for transporting prisoners. A narrow corridor ran up the centre, on both sides of which were many very low and narrow doors. When a prisoner stepped in to the corridor, he was ordered by an N. K. V. D.

standing there, to enter, backwards one of the cabins. These compartments were unlit and so small that the prisoners were forced to adopt a crouching position. This was the prisoners' first experience of the "tshorni voron" (black crow), well-known to Soviet citizens. Some of the prisoners already extremely nervous on account of having been thus apparently especially picked out from the 5,000 other P. O. W's and very bewildered by the several days journey in what were to them hitherto inconceivable conditions and the constant abuse hurled at them by the guards, were reluctant to enter the dark, narrow holes, assuming that this was some unknown method of torture or even of execution. The guards however, pushed them in, and, after shutting the door, called out for the next prisoner.

As the prisoners were taken singly from their huts at Smolensk, conducted to the station and loaded into the train in twos and threes, they had no idea who their fellow-travellers were. They did not see them until their arrival at the Smolensk station. Just as during the journey every prisoner had tried in vain to puzzle out the reason for his deportation from Kozielsk by analysing his past life and particularly the period of imprisonment, so now in the bus each one tried to guess what the future held in store for him by analysing the composition of the whole group, in which everyone had one or two acquaintances. The group was; however, so mixed that there seemed to be no logical grounds for its composition.

There were altogether 14 officers in the group, including a retired Colonel named Stanislaw Lipkind-Lubodziecki, a public prosecutor of the Supreme Court, Colonel Starzynski, a cavalry officer and formerly Polish Military Attaché in Belgium; Captain Radziszewski, an officer formerly attached to the Military Replacements Office and Lieutenant Graniczny, a naval officer who had played an important part in the Polish rising against the Germans in Silesia after the last war.

After travelling for less than twenty minutes, the prisoners were unloaded in a small yard, surrounded by buildings with barred windows. Five prisoners were separated from the group and conducted to one of the buildings; the rest were ordered to re-enter the "tshorni voron". After a few minutes they were ordered out again and four more were put into the prison. Then the bus drove off with the remaining five.

Thus in the yard of the Smolensk prison on the afternoon of 13.3.40 the group of prisoners from Kozielsk was broken up.

Of the whole group only one prisoner has been heard of since, having succeeded in escaping from the U. S. S. R. This particular prisoner was one of the second group of four who entered the Smolensk prison.¹

¹ His experiences, according to his report were as follows:

After waiting for about half an hour in the yard, the prisoners were taken to the prison office, from where two were taken to their cells without delay. The remainder had to wait another few hours. When the night was well advanced the latter were taken to the underground cellars and ordered to undress completely. They were then subjected to an exceptionally thorough personal search (even to the mouth and anus) during which articles of value, sharp instruments, papers, braces, belts, string etc. were confiscated. After another hour of waiting they were conducted to a brightly illuminated cell, containing two beds and two chairs. During the first night the prisoners were awakened several times by guards looking into the cell and instructing them how to sleep in prison (it is forbidden to cover hands or face with the blanket, to lie on the stomach or on the side; the face must be visible through the opening in the door (so-called "judas").

On the morning of the third day this Kozielsk prisoner was sent with a convoy of Soviet prisoners, but strictly isolated from them, first in a "tshorni voron" and then in a "zaka" (prison) truck to Kharkov.

In Kharkov the prisoners were refused admission, as the prison was already overcrowded, and were sent to Kiev. At Kiev the Polish prisoner was taken to the "interior prison of the N. K. V. D." in Korolenko Street. When handing him over in the prison office the guard stated that he had brought a prisoner-of-war from camp No. 13. During an examination similar to the one at Smolensk, the guard tore off the metal hooks from the collar of the Polish uniform, the iron rim and strap from the military cap, from which he also took the eagle (Polish National Emblem) saying "that bird has flown away from you". He was about to tear off all the metal buttons from the tunic, at which the prisoner protested violently afraid of catching cold in a buttonless uniform.

The "internal" prison was an investigation prison and the strictest isolation was enforced. When prisoners were taken through the corridors, the attendant constantly flicked his fingers and smacked his lips in order to give notice of his approach to other guards who might be conducting prisoners. In the case of a meeting, one of the prisoners was pushed into an empty cell, or, if there was none at hand, was made to stand with his face to the wall, being strictly forbidden to turn round. To prevent suicide attempts, the staircase was surrounded by string-nets, so that when going up and down stairs the prisoners had to keep close to the wall.

The cells were searched every five or six days. In the presence of two guards the prisoner had to strip completely; his body, his personal possessions, his bedding, the windows, doors, floors and walls were examined and the radiators shaken. All this was carried out to the accompaniment of abuse and of vulgar jokes and jeers about the Polish uniform, Polish State and Polish Forces.

During the first weeks in prison, the prisoner's fingerprints were taken four times as well as his photographs full face and profile. On the eighth day he was taken out of his cell with his belongings, searched with extreme thoroughness, ordered to leave his possessions in another cell and conducted through internal passages to the N. K. V. D. building. Here the N. K. V. D. "investigator", Gusiev, informed him in the presence of two other members of the N. K. V. D. that the Soviet authorities possessed "incomplete, but concrete and very serious" evidence about himself and his activities, in view of which the only way he could save himself would be to confess his guilt and tell the whole truth. The investigator asked him when,

Footnote 1—Continued

where and by whom he had been recruited for the Japanese Intelligence Service, what tasks had been given him and how far he had succeeded in carrying them out.

The prisoner, who since his departure from Kozielsk had been racking his brain for the possible cause of his removal, was amazed and disgusted by this fantastic accusation of spying for Japan. In answering he showed his disgust and was consequently abused by the "investigator", who called him "the servant of a capitalist state which persecutes the workers and peasants, exploiting them and sucking their blood."

After about twenty minutes "conversation", during which the prisoner, also adopting a somewhat harsh tone, categorically denied the accusations of espionage, the "investigator" said that the prisoner himself had declared in the Kozielsk camp that he went to tea at the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw. As the Japanese do not give tea for nothing, it was obvious that he must have done them some service. After giving this "damning proof", he ordered the prisoner to be taken away, advising him to think the matter over and refresh his memory about the whole of his work for Japan, so as to be able to give an account of it next time.

After this "interrogation", of which no official record was kept, the prisoner was taken to another cell, which was already occupied by another prisoner, a Soviet citizen charged with espionage for a foreign state—but not Japan. Numerous subsequent interrogations took place at night, but the attitude of the interrogators was less harsh and there was no further mention of espionage. On the contrary a very polite manner was adopted and during one of the interrogations the "investigator" even tried to tempt the prisoner, half-starved on prison fare, to tea with sugar and rolls with butter and sausage. The "investigator" appealed to the prisoner "not to obstruct the Soviet authorities in important matters of state", urging him to give them a detailed and accurate written account of his life and a description of the structure, organisation and competence of Polish courts as well as of the Siberian Association of which the prisoner had declared himself a member in his life sketch.

The discussion on the Siberian Association took up several long sessions, the "investigator" vainly striving to induce the prisoner to write that the object of this Association was to obtain information concerning Siberia for the benefit of the former Polish Government. All the prisoner's explanations that the Siberian Association was one of the associations of former combatants who were in Siberia during the First World War had no effect. During the thirteenth interrogation on 23.3.40, the "investigator's" assistant handed the prisoner an "indictment" bearing that day's date, charging him in accordance with Article 53 para 13, of the Soviet Penal Code, with serving the former Tsarist judicature and the military and civilian judicature in Poland. The "indictment" did not mention "espionage". The prisoner—a qualified and experienced lawyer—protested against the contents of the indictment and against the detention of a prisoner of war in a Soviet prison as if he were a common criminal, and referred to international laws and conventions. Whereupon, he was told by the Soviet official that the so-called Polish Army was an ordinary "White Guard Band", the U. S. S. R. was not interested in "foreign" or "bourgeois" laws and, that he was to sign a declaration to the effect that he had seen his indictment, adding that the prisoner would be able to lodge any objections to this indictment with the appropriate authorities.

At the next interrogation by the "investigator", the prisoner took advantage of the right to appeal against the indictment. In his appeal, which was prepared without the help of any legal textbooks, the prisoners pointed out that:

a) from 8.3.40 up to the day of receiving the indictment, i. e., for 1½ months, he had been deprived of liberty without any legal grounds.

b) the indictment of 23.4.40 was devoid of any legal foundations, since the fact of serving in the Tsarist judicature twenty years ago is not a cause for prosecution, particularly in view of the fact that the prisoner, as a Tsarist judge, served the cause of the future revolution, giving assistance to the P. P. S. (Polish Socialist Party) fighters, and after the outbreak of the revolution in 1917 was elected a member of the Soviets.

c) the services carried out by a citizen of a foreign state in his own country cannot form the basis for prosecution by a Soviet court, particularly as they had not brought against him any concrete charges connected with his service in the Polish judicature.

In conclusion the appeal asked for withdrawal of the accusation, and the sending of the prisoner, either to his permanent domicile in Poland or to a neutral country, or to a camp for Polish prisoners of war. The prisoner received no answer either to this appeal or to other similar representations, all of which were referred to the public prosecutor of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the public prosecutor of the U. S. S. R. etc. After the end of April 1940, he was no longer called for interrogation.

During the second half of August 1940, after a period of 3½ months spent in prison in extremely hard physical and psychological conditions, the prisoner was again summoned for "interrogation". This time he was brought before another investigator, with a very familiar face, who asked him: "have we not met before?"

In fact he was a man named Smarin, who as a "politruk" (political officer) in the Kozielsk camp during the winter of 1939/40, had been exceptionally "kind" to the prisoner, often entering into "private conversations" with him and thereby gleaned information on subjects which had not been touched in official interrogations.

In the course of several interrogations Smarin persistently raised the "Japanese" question, but learnt nothing except what the prisoner had already told him in "private conversations" at Kozielsk about his invitation to tea at the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw. Smarin beguiled the prisoner about the possibility of his return to Warsaw and very discretely tried to discover whether the Soviet authorities could count on him as an agent.

The following conversation arose:

Q. "Let us imagine", said Smarin, "that the Public Prosecutor annuls your case. Let us suppose that your request to return to German-occupied Poland is complied with, that the Germans allow you to live at liberty in Warsaw in your own apartment. What would you do?"

A. "I would rest after my exhausting experiences."

Q. "Supposing I turned up at your apartment for one day, would you give me a cup of tea?"

A. "I do not know if there would be any tea there."

Q. "And would you put me up for the night?"

A. "You have the large Soviet Legation in Warsaw. You would be better off and more comfortable there."

Q. "But if I did not want the Soviet Legation to know of my arrival; if I came incognito as a spy, would you take me in and report to the Gestapo that a Soviet agent had arrived?"

A. "I do not know the regulations in Warsaw about reporting. I do not know what has happened to my apartment. In these circumstances I cannot give you an answer".

Smarin's task was to finish the investigation which had been dragging on for more than six months. During one of the interrogations a formal record was made of the questioning of the prisoner on charges relating to:

a) serving in the Russian Tsarist judicature.

b) service in the military and civilian judicature in Poland.

c) participation in the "nationalist and anti-Soviet Siberian Association".

Subsequently the "record of investigation" was shown to him, and it contained besides a few formal statement, only evidence and reports written by the prisoner himself. This complete "record" was sent to the

26. *Kozielsk II. C. The Convoy of 7.4.40.*¹

According to the diary of Major Adam Solski (file No. 0490),² which was found at Katyn, the fate of this convoy (numbering 110.120 officers) after it left Kozielsk on 7.4.40 was as follows:

"Sunday morning, 7.4.40. After yesterday when the people from the "Skit" (see page 20) were put into one hut where we are today, we have been ordered to pack up our things by 11.40 a. m. in order to go to the Club for a search. Lunch in the Club . . . (illegible). After the search at 14.55 we left the walls and the wires of the Kozielsk camp (the Gorki Rest House). At 16.55 (22.55 p. m., Polish time), at the Kozielsk railway siding, we were put into prison trucks. It is said, that in the U. S. S. R. 50% of passenger coaches are prison trucks. With me are going Joseph Kutyba,³ Capt. Paul Szyfter,⁴ and some Majors, a Lt. Colonels and Captains—12 in all. Accommodation for 7 at the most.

"8.4.40. 3.30 a. m. departure from Kozielsk station moving East. 9.30 a. m. at Jelnia station.

"8.4.40. Since 12 we have been standing in a railway siding at Smolensk.

"9.4.40. In the morning some minutes before 5, reveille in the prison trucks and preparing to leave. We are to go somewhere by car. What next?

"9.4.40. From dawn the day started in a special way. Departure in prison coach in cells (terrible). Taken somewhere into a wood, something like a country house. Here a special search. I was relieved of my watch, pointing to 6.30 a. m. (8.30 a. m. Polish time), asked about a wedding-ring. Roubles, belt and pocket knife taken away." Here the diary breaks off.

27. *Kozielsk II. D. Convoy of 8.4.40.*

On April 8th a convoy of 277 people left Kozielsk. None of them were heard of again. At Katyn a diary was found beside the body of an unidentified soldier: (Body No. 424). In this diary there was amongst other things a drawing of a man with a beard, bearing the signature "Kruk Wacław, Kozielsk, 1940". From the diary it was possible to decipher the following description of the experience of this convoy:

"8.4.40. Up to now I have not written anything, as I thought there was nothing special. Recently, i. e. at the end of March and beginning of April, there was a feeling of departure in the air. We took it for the usual gossip. But the gossip turned out to be true. In the first days of April convoys began to leave, at first small ones. From the "Skit" mostly . . . (illegible) of more than a dozen persons. In the end on Saturday the 6th the "Skit" was liquidated and transferred to the main camp. We were temporarily put in the Majors' block. Yesterday a convoy of senior officers left: three General, 20–25 Colonels and about the same number of Majors. Because of the way they departed we were in the best spirits. Today my turn has come. In the morning I had a bath and washed my socks and handkerchiefs . . . (illegible) "to the Club with your belongings." After we had given back all Government property another search took place in hut 19, and from there we were conducted through the gates to the buses, in which we drove to a little station, not Kozielsk (Kozielsk is cut off by floods). At the station we were loaded into prison trucks under strict guard. In the prison cell (which I am seeing for the first time) we are thirteen. I do not

Footnote 1—Continued

Public Prosecutor and the prisoner was still kept in prison. A few days after the culmination of the "investigation", the prisoner was taken to the doctor, who ordered him to take off his uniform and shirt, glanced at his chest and back and without a word sent him back to his cell. In the doctor's opinion this intellectual of over 60 years of age, having spent a year in camps and prisons, was perfectly fit for heavy work in a "correctional" forced labour camp.

On 16.10.40 the prisoner was transferred from the "internal" N. K. V. D. prison to a prison at Lukianovka, where he was to wait for the "verdict". A few months later he was called into the prison office and informed that according to the verdict of the "O. S. O." (Osoboie Sovieshtshanye, a Special N. K. V. D. Council) he had been described "socially dangerous person" and "condemned to 8 years in a correctional labour camp, situated in the far North". In December 1940, he then went to this camp, from which he was freed, as a result of persistent requests by the Polish Embassy, on 8.3.42, six months and twenty-two days, after the announcement of the so-called, "amnesty" for Polish citizens, 12.8.41 and four months after Molotov's declaration that the "amnesty" concerning Polish prisoners of war and other prisoners had been carried out to the full and that not a single person of this category was still in captivity on Soviet territory. (See below PART TWO).

¹ About the first three convoys to leave Kozielsk on April 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1940 we had no information at all. The fourth, which—it will be remembered included—The 3 Generals, and left Kozielsk in very high spirits, after a farewell celebration organised in the camp—also disappeared.

² The bodies and the objects found with them at Katyn were each listed and given a number (see PART THREE). The Germans gave the bodies of General Smorawinski and General Bohatyrewicz found in the same grave as that of Major Solski, the Nos. 1 and 2. The body of General Minkiewicz who was in civilian clothes (see above) was not identified at Katyn.

³ Found at Katyn—body No. 481.

⁴ Not identified at Katyn.

know yet my chance companions in misfortune. Now we are waiting to depart. As much as I was optimistic before, I'm coming now to the conclusion that this journey is not good at all. The worst thing is that it is not known whether we shall be able to find out in which direction we shall go. We have to wait patiently. We are moving in the direction of Smolensk. It is a sunny day, a lot of snow still on the ground.

"9.4.40. Tuesday. We spent the night more comfortably than in the former cattle trucks. There was a little more room and not such a frightful shaking. Today is a real winter's day. Snow is whirling around, it is cloudy. In the fields as much snow as in January. It is not possible to find out in which direction we are going. During the night we moved very little, now we have just passed the station of Spas-Demianskoie. I have never noticed such a station on the way to Smolensk on the map. I am afraid we are going to the North or North-East, judging by the weather. During the days it is just like it used to be. Yesterday morning we were given a portion of bread and some sugar. Cold boiled water was put into the truck. It is now nearly mid-day, but we have not been given anything to eat. Our treatment is also . . . brutal. They permit us nothing. We are allowed to go to the lavatory only when it pleases the guards: neither asking nor shouting helps." (There follow a few reminiscences of the "Skit", which are omitted here).

"It is 14.30. We are coming to Smolensk. For the time being we are standing in a goods station. . . . We are really at Smolensk. It is almost evening, we have passed Smolensk and are now in Gniezdovo station. It looks as if we are to get out here, for there are a great many soldiers moving about. In any case we have literally had nothing to eat up to now. From breakfast time yesterday we have been living on a piece of bread and a small drink of water." Here the diary breaks off.

28. Kozielsk II. E. Convoy of 26.4.40.

Nearly all the people in the 16th convoy, which left Kozielsk on 26.4.40, unlike those who were in the first fifteen, afterwards re-appeared quite safe in another P. O. W.'s camp. (See page 50.) Their reports give us direct evidence of the treatment received by the prisoners during these journeys and some idea of the destination of the earlier convoys.

Just as in the case of previous convoys, on the morning of 26.4.40 a soldier of the N. K. V. D. read out in the living quarters the names of all those who were to leave that day. There were altogether 160 people on the list. All of them with the exception of about 40 cadets, were officers. Among these were a great majority of those Polish officers of German descent who have previously declared themselves to the camp authorities to be, Volksdeutsche."

They were assembled in the club and were conducted to one of the huts close to the wall which surrounded the camp. In a search they were deprived of all sharp objects, even spoons. They were however allowed to keep their personal documents and letters from families and friends. After, they were taken out of the camp, escorted by a strong N. K. V. D. guard, and loaded into heavy lorries, very overcrowded, which took them to the railway siding at Kozielsk, where prison trucks were already waiting.

Fourteen to sixteen persons were pushed into each compartment and the doors locked. In the corridors were armed guards who escorted prisoners to the lavatory twice a day at appointed times. Each group was allowed to stay there three minutes.

After a few hours the train began to move. The prisoners tried to calculate the direction in which they were going, by the sun. Only a few optimists still believed they were going "home", as had been vaguely suggested by the authorities at Kozielsk. The majority had grown much more pessimistic as a result of the prison trucks and the strong escort. On the walls of the compartments they found messages written up by members of previous convoys who had been transported in the same trucks. From these messages it appeared that they had travelled towards Smolensk, which confirmed the rumours which had been circulating at Kozielsk of the existence of a specially isolated transit camp there. The following are quotations from two reports of members of the convoy of 26.4.40:

"Soldiers who had previously left Kozielsk had promised us to leave messages in the trucks saying where they were going and what was happening to them. I found one such message, written by someone who had gone before me, saying that they were standing in the second station after Smolensk, and that the occupants of the front trucks were being transferred into cars and driven off in

an unknown direction. I don't really remember whether that message said the second station after Smolensk or a station near Smolensk, but in any case, it was either one or the other." (Witness 14).

"In my compartment of the prison truck, I found an inscription in Polish: 'We are leaving at the second station beyond Smolensk. Cars are waiting for us.' In other compartments were similar messages." (Witness 13).

"The journey lasted over twenty-four hours. In the afternoon of 27.4.40 the prisoners disembarked at Babinino station, from whence they were driven in heavy lorries to a camp at Pavlishtchev Bor.

"During the journey by road from Babinino station to Pavlishtchev Bor, the guards deliberately tormented the prisoners. The locked lorries were incredibly overcrowded and shook terribly on the rough roads. Two officers fainted. Anyone who tried to hold the side of the lorry was hit on the fingers with a bayonet". (Witness 4.)

29. Kozielsk II. F. Convoy of 29.4.40.

From this convoy only one person was found, having been separated from the convoy at the station of Gniezdovaia (Gniezdovo), near Smolensk, with extracts from it, of the report of the officer concerned.

"... The convoy was composed of 5 (perhaps 6) prison trucks. ... We calculated that there were about 300 of us. We were put into separate compartments. In my compartment there were 14 people. ..."

"We left Kozielsk in the late evening. ... At sunrise we were at Smolensk. We stood there for a few minutes only, then the train moved on in a North-Westerly direction. It was a bright, sunny day. From the shadows of the telegraph poles we realised that we were travelling North-West. This fact was greeted with joy, as many began to believe they were really taking us to Poland. After travelling for several kilometres the train halted. The rumour spread that we were to be unloaded. ..."

"... After about half-an-hour's wait a Colonel of the N. K. V. D. entered our truck, called out my name, announced that I was to be separated from the convoy and ordered me to collect my things. He personally conducted me to an empty prison truck, where I was locked into one of the compartments. A special guard stood in the corridor before barred doors. Shortly after I heard some sort of noise in an adjacent truck, the hum of a motor and the cries of the prisoners. Prison trucks are so constructed that the walls of compartments have no windows, except for a small square of glass right under the ceiling. By climbing on the highest shelf (intended for luggage) it is possible to see out. I therefore pretended that I wanted to sleep and climbed on to it. Soon the guard was standing with his back to the door of my compartment and looking out of the window (the corridors of prison trucks have windows). So I was able to look out. We were standing outside the station. Before us was a big square partly covered with grass. At right angles to the railway ran a road, skirting the left side of the square. The horizon was covered with a wood. The square was surrounded by N. K. V. D. guards with bayonets and rifles. The distance between the guards was about 10 feet. In the square stood a passenger bus, its windows smeared with cement. ..."

"... The entrance to the bus was at the back; it came right up to the trucks so that the prisoners were able to enter it directly from the trucks. On both sides of the entrance to the bus stood N. K. V. D. men. Two of them had bayonets on their rifles. About 30 people got into the bus. It drove off in the direction of the wood and after a certain time (about half-an-hour) returned to collect the next party. The whole thing was supervised by a colonel of the N. K. V. D., the same one who took me away from the convoy. ..."

"After the unloading was completed, I was handed over to a Captain of the N. K. V. D., who turned out to be the governor of the Smolensk prison. In a special prison car he took me to the so-called 'internal' N. K. V. D. prison, in the cellars of the Smolensk N. K. V. D. office. ..."

This officer was subsequently taken to the Lubianka prison in Moscow, where six months later he was condemned by the administrative authorities to 8 years hard labour. He was not released until April, 1942.

30. Kozielsk II. G. Convoy of 12.5.40.

When the convoy left Kozielsk on 12.5.40 the liquidation of the P. O. W. camp for officers was practically completed. On this occasion a general order to prepare to leave was given to all the prisoners, of which there were about a hundred remaining in the camp. A list was however, read out in the morning on which were the names of 9 people who were ordered to stay in the camp.

Impatient and exasperated by the prolonged wait for their departure from Kozielsk, the prisoners hurried over their breakfast and assembled of their own accord in front of the gates of the camp. Here however, they were unexpectedly made to wait a long time before the direction of their journey was finally decided upon, as General Zarubin's deputy Major Elman was discussing the question with Moscow.

From the report of one of the prisoners it seems that it was at first intended that the destination of the convoy should be the same as that of earlier ones—namely to Smolensk; but that at the last minute another decision was taken in Moscow.

"We were kept standing right in front of the gates. We waited quite a long time. The sun was beating down. I entered into conversation with Commissar Dymidowicz, who was leaning on the gate. He always formed up the convoys. 'Where are we going?' I asked.—'You are going towards Smolensk,'—'Is Smolensk a nice town?'—'Yes, a fine city'—he replied. 'But, you will not see it.' 'What are we waiting for?' I asked.—'For Elman, who is telephoning to Moscow. . . . After a time Elman appeared, took Dymidowicz aside and started to talk to him". (Witness 6).

When Major Elman came up after the prisoners were superficially searched, led out of the camp, loaded into heavy lorries and driven, under strong escort, to a small station near Kozielsk. The prison trucks were already waiting. One of the prisoners noticed that "Babinino" was freshly written in chalk on the trucks. Others saw the half obliterated name of "Gniezdovo".

After travelling for more than 24 hours "in unbelievably bad conditions", the train reached Babinino station. During the journey, prisoners in many different compartment discovered messages left there by members of previous convoys. In several of them the name of "Gniezdovo" station was mentioned.

Two witnesses have given the following reports about this:

"In my compartment was an inscription written by someone in a previous convoy. 'We shall be disembarked at Gniezdovo. We can see the lorries waiting.' " (Witness 15).

" . . . In the railway truck which was carrying us to Pawlishtchev Bor, I found scratched on the ceiling, inscriptions bearing dates which corresponded to the dates of departure of other convoys: 'We are disembarking at Gniezdovo, not far from Smolensk. We are going somewhere in lorries.' " (Witness 16).

After a wait of several hours in Babinino, the prisoners were taken out of the trucks and put into lorries, which carried them to the camp at Pawlishtchev Bor. Members of the convoy of 12.5.40 give a fairly detailed account of this part of the journey. "So many prisoners were put into the lorries standing with their backs to the engine that there was not an inch to spare. Then at a word of command, all the prisoners were ordered to sit down, with the result that each person was pinned down by the man in front, their legs becoming mixed up. Every time the prisoners moved in the lorry the Soviet guards prodded them with bayonet points. By the time they had driven over 40 kilometres (about 25 miles), many of the prisoners had fainted." (Witness 17).

"We had to sit all the time and it was forbidden to move. In each lorry were seated three Soviet soldiers with rifles pointing at us. In addition, a machine gun was mounted on a special lorry, in which there were also specially trained police dogs". (Witness 15).

CHAPTER III. THE CAMP AT STAROBIELSK

31. *Topographical and historical description of the camp.*

Starobielsk is a small town in the province of Voroshilovgrad (South-Eastern Ukraine) (see the map). After the revolution large transit camps were established there to accommodate the intelligentsia who had been deported from the large town. There political prisoners were sorted out before being sent to correctional labour camps in the North. During the years 1939–41 one of these camps was used for Polish prisoners of war, and they were put in in numbers far exceeding its capacity. The camp was situated on the outskirts of the town on the site of a former monastery, which was surrounded by a high wall. In an area of a few hectares stood two orthodox churches and various monastery buildings. In the autumn of 1939 the larger church was used for storing wheat which, according to the prisoners, was gradually transported to Germany in compliance with the Soviet-German economic agreement. It was finally emptied in 1940, after which it was used for a time as prisoners' living quarters. The prisoners cleaned it out themselves and built tiers of bunks, from floor to ceiling.

The smaller church used by the Polish P. O. W.s from the beginning as living quarters had been fitted with seven tiers of bunks. The space between the bunks was so small that the prisoners had the impression of living in "small, smelly boxes, placed one on top of the other." Those living at the bottom of this human ant-heap were in perpetual darkness. The other monastery outhouses, stables, etc. were no less crowded. There were not enough bunks for all the prisoners arriving at the camp, so they had to sleep on the ground, in corridors—and in fact, wherever they could find a little space. Altogether the whole camp was completely neglected, dilapidated and filthy.

At the main entrance was a guard-room and beside it a very narrow gate, through which prisoners leaving the camp had to pass in single file. The headquarters of the Soviet camp administration were situated outside the walls.

In the centre of the camp was the so-called "osoby otdiel" (Special Branch) composed of a team of N. K. V. D. officials whose task was to compile evidence and carry out investigations.

While officer prisoners of war were there, the condition of the Starobielsk camp was very much improved. The officers (to a great extent on their own initiative) repaired existing buildings, built two large huts, kitchens (hitherto there had been only field kitchens), shower baths, laundries, and latrines. They sank three artesian wells, drained the ground, put the electric plant in working order and organized for smithy, and carpentry, boot repairing, and tailoring workshops.

There was no "Club" at Starobielsk although these are found in most Soviet camps. Soviet propaganda films were at first shown out in the open and later in the partially empty large church. At the beginning of 1940 a very small reading-room was opened in the camp with accommodation for 10 persons at the most.

32. *Starobielsk I. (September–October, 1939) Camp for prisoners of war from the ranks.*

In the period immediately following the Soviet aggression against Poland, Polish prisoners of war were indiscriminately sent to Starobielsk camp. By the beginning of October the camp already contained 8,000 people, mostly privates, who were treated more or less the same as those who were at that time at Kozielsk on account of the overcrowding. The living conditions, quarters and food were extremely bad and made worse by continuous rain, snow and mud. It should be emphasized that barely half the prisoners were housed in the buildings; the rest lived in roofless sheds and a few tents.

During the second half of October there was at Starobielsk, as at Kozielsk, a noticeable tendency to turn the camp into an officers' camp. At the end of October and the beginning of November, N. C. O.'s and privates, numbering altogether over 6,000, were taken away and increasingly large numbers of officer prisoners arrived.¹

During November the camp was almost emptied of other ranks and Starobielsk was converted into a camp for Polish officers.

33. *Starobielsk II. (November, 1939–May, 1940). A. Inmates of the Camp.*

The officers' camp at Starobielsk contained about 4,000 prisoners of war including about 100 cadet officers and a few dozen civilians (judges, public prosecutors, civil servants and landowners), Senior officers, from Lt. Colonels upwards, were from the outset separated from the other officers and housed outside the main camp. In the "Generals' House," situated about 550 yards from the camp, lived 8 Generals and a few senior Colonels; about 100 Colonels and senior Lt. Colonels lived in the so-called "Colonels' Quarters" about 330 yards from the camp. When the liquidation of the camp was begun in April 1940, the separate "Colonels' Quarters" were abolished and the inhabitants transferred to the main camp.

As at Kozielsk, the movement of prisoners to and from Starobielsk diminished considerably after its conversion into an officers' camp, but did not entirely cease. Throughout the winter small groups continued to come and go. About 100 persons in all were removed mostly in connection with interrogations. These were officers of the Intelligence Service and prisoners suspected of conducting "anti-Soviet" activities among their fellows. Most of those taken away were never seen again; a few, however, after many months in investigation prisons or correctional labour camps, regained their freedom in 1941 as a result of the "amnesty." (See PART TWO).

¹ In particular, on 16th November a convoy of approximately 2,000 officers arrived at Starobielsk. Half of them, including General Stanislaw Haller, remained there, the other half being sent on to Kozielsk.

The day before Christmas Eve, all Army Chaplains of all denominations among whom were the Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army, Major Steinberg and a Protestant Superintendent Potocki were removed from Starobielsk, as also from Kozielsk. According to Czapski (*Souvenirs de Starobielsk*, Paris (?) 1945), some of them, after spending several weeks in a Moscow prison, were brought back to Starobielsk and put in the prison tower, strictly isolated from the other prisoners. Later they were again deported in an unknown direction, after which all traces of most of them were lost. A few subsequently went to the camp at Ostashkov (See below), and shared the lot of its inmates.

Nearly 50% of the inmates of Starobielsk II were officers taken prisoner by the Soviets after the capitulation of Lvov, after having been guaranteed "personal liberty" and the right to travel to neutral countries (see p. 10). Many of the other officers had been arrested in Poland during the registration of Polish officers ordered by the Soviets, and after a few months detention in various prisons, were brought to Starobielsk. For instance on January 10th 1940, 13 people, including 3 civilian "criminals" arrived at Starobielsk from the Stanislavov prison.

In the early spring of 1940 the majority of the cadet officers were liberated from Starobielsk. Some of them succeeded in reaching Poland and informed the prisoners' relations of the conditions in the Starobielsk camp. They suggested that their release meant that the camp was to be gradually liquidated and the prisoners sent home, in order of rank, the lower ranks being liberated first. Many of these cadet officers were subsequently arrested "in the ordinary way" as "civilian criminals" and put into "normal" Soviet correctional labour camps. (Witness 22).

Reckoning on the basis of their ranks in the Polish Forces, there were at Starobielsk at the time when the liquidation of the camp began:

- 8 Generals
- about 150 Colonels and Lt. Colonels
- about 230 Majors
- about 1,000 Captains
- about 2,450 1st and 2nd Lieutenants
- about 30 Cadet officers
- 52 civilians.

making in all a total of about 3,920 persons.

Among these were a few hundred airforce officers, the whole staff of the Military Institute of Chemical Warfare, including the distinguished expert, Major Brzozowski—and many other well-known military experts.

About 50% of the officers in the camps were officers of the reserve and, as at Kozielsk, among them all civilian professions were represented. There were:—

- a) about twenty professors, lecturers and readers of Polish Universities and Colleges.
- b) about 380 military and civilian doctors.
- c) a few hundred lawyers, judges, public prosecutors and barristers
- d) a few hundred engineers
- e) numerous secondary and elementary school teachers
- f) some poets, writers and journalists
- g) politicians, including Eiger, Vice-President of the Polish Anti-Hitler League.

As at Kozielsk there were at Starobielsk a few people disabled in the last war and arrested by the Soviet authorities as officers.

34. *Starobielsk II. B. Camp authorities—regulations.*

A considerable amount of internal autonomy was allowed from the start of the Starobielsk officers' camp. This was perhaps due to the personal character of the first Polish "senior" of the camp, Major Sobieslaw Zalewski, who was an engineer. This officer was extremely capable, with an excellent knowledge of the Russian language, and a very energetic administrator and organiser. From the time of his arrival at Starobielsk with the first large party of officers, he worked day and night planning the building of suitable camp accommodation and persistently negotiating with the Soviet authorities.

The result of this was that the Soviet authorities left all matters connected with the internal life of the camp in the hands of the Polish "Headquarters" or "Administrative Council", confining themselves to supervising Polish activities and to carrying on their "proper" work—i. e. investigations and political work among the prisoners.

The Soviet Commandant of the camp was Colonel Berezkov of the N. K. V. D. He was usually out of the camp and had very little contact with the prisoners.

In practice four or five young, well-trained N. K. V. D. officers deputised for the commandant. These officers took it in turn to carry out the 24 hours a day duty of the camp commandant, having under them several N. C. O's and messengers.

The camp political commissar, Kirshin, unlike Berezkov, was rather hostile to the prisoners. He had at his disposal a dozen or more "politruks", who de facto supervised the life of the camp and "looked after" the residential blocks allotted to them.

At the head of the "osoby otdiel" (Special Branch) was Major Lediediev of the N. K. V. D. Assisted by a staff of investigating officers, he organised the investigations and the collection of evidence.

Soviet administrative and technical officials, as well as doctors, were in practice concerned only with supervising the work of prisoners with professional qualifications.

It should be emphasized that at Starobielsk, contrary to Kozielsk, prisoners were not forbidden to write in their letters that they were in a "prisoner of war camp". Starobielsk, like all "normal" camps in Russia, was under the jurisdiction of the N. K. V. D. instead of under that of the military authorities, as is the general practice in the case of prisoner of war camps. This fact was confirmed by the official stamp of the camp, which bore the inscription: "Upravlenie Starobielskogo Lagiera N. K. V. D., U. S. S. R. (N. K. V. D. Camp Command, Starobielsk, U. S. S. R.)"

The camp regulations, announced to the prisoners in the second half of October 1939, by Commissar Kirshin, strictly prohibited all forms of praying or singing, meetings, lectures, mutual instruction and even reading aloud. Prisoners were forbidden to enter any huts except their own or stand in large groups outside the buildings. Walks were to be taken in groups of two or three at the most. The writing of diaries or notes was prohibited. It was strictly forbidden to turn out the light in the huts at night, and to leave the huts after dusk. No card games or games of chance were permitted.

35. Starobielsk II. C. prisoners' living conditions

The decrease of over 50% in the number of camp inmates after November, 1939, greatly contributed to the improvement of conditions. The repair of the buildings and the general organisation of the camp, during November and December, improved things still more. After the middle of December every inmate was sheltered from wind and rain. Bedding was gradually supplied. In principle every prisoner received a blanket, a sheet, a palliasse and a paper pillow-case.

As at Kozielsk, living conditions varied to a certain extent according to military rank and the particular quarters in which a prisoner lived.

The living quarters of senior officers were relatively comfortable. Generals had their own orderlies, and some of them adjutants as well.

The repairing of old buildings and the erection of new ones lessened the plague of bugs in the camp. The installation of delousing baths and wash-houses and the energy of the Polish medical personnel did much to reduce the numbers of lice which had hitherto infested the camp.

The liberation of private soldiers from the camp somewhat improved the officers clothing situation. The departing men willingly, often without payment, left for the officers their sweaters, mufflers, shirts, boots etc.—all invaluable in the Soviet Union. Despite the requests made by the Polish "Headquarters" to the Soviet authorities for warm clothes and boots for the men engaged in rebuilding the camp, they only succeeded in obtaining up to the time of liquidation of the camp a few dozen "tielogleisk" (thick suits).

36. Starobielsk II. D. Camp self-government.

Immediately on arrival at Starobielsk, Major Zalewski, who was appointed "senior" of the camp, proceeded on his own initiative to adapt the camp buildings to suit the needs of the inmates. He organized as team of about 200 qualified men, mostly sappers, who accomplished this task. The Soviet authorities had promised that members of this team would receive a 25% increase in their rations and an extra three roubles per day. This promise was only partially kept, as members of the team were only once given extra pay.

After the completion of the most important work in the camp, Major Zalewski, who enjoyed the general goodwill and trust of his colleagues, was suddenly called before the Soviet commandant on the night of December 22nd, 1939. From that time he was kept in strict isolation until they started to liquidate the camp in April 1940.¹

¹ "On April 5th, 1940, he appeared once again in the camp, ill and weak looking as though he had risen from the grave. We greeted him warmly. With one of the first parties to leave the camp at the start of its liquidation, Major Zalewski passed through the gates for the second time. He never came back to us." (Witness 23).

Major Zalewski's successor as Polish "senior" was Major K. Niewiarowski, who in turn was taken away from Starobielsk and was succeeded by Major L. Chrystowski, an artillery officer. The last man to hold that position at Starobielsk.

The administration of the camp was organized in such a way that the Polish camp "senior" had subordinate to him seniors of individual huts, the inmates of the larger ones being divided into companies. In principle the camp authorities had dealings only with the Polish camp "senior", who passed on their instructions by calling a conference of huts "seniors". As the latter generally knew their people well, this method made for administrative efficiency and reduced misunderstandings arising from the officers generally inadequate knowledge of Russian.

Polish camp "Headquarters" also theoretically subordinated to the Soviet administration enjoyed considerable autonomy in the organizations of special services such as the distribution of food, blankets, fuel etc., which was performed by the Polish "Quartermaster". The keys and control of the camp food stores remained in Soviet hands.

Medical services and the general hygiene of the camp were in the hands of the Polish doctors who organized a first aid, a provisional hospital and a dental clinic.

37. Starobielsk II. E. Food and work.

The kitchen was well organized and staffed by the prisoners but the "Polish administration" could not prevent Soviet officials from removing tins of fats, the better kinds of fish etc., from the food stores. The food at Starobielsk was practically the same as that at Kozielsk, with the one difference that, on consequence of the comparatively large degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Poles at Starobielsk, the Soviet authorities had less opportunity for fraud and the prisoners therefore received better and more tasty meals.

As at Kozielsk, at Starobielsk work was not compulsory for all inmates. Officers of senior rank, living in separate quarters, were entirely exempt. In the main camp, in the morning the Soviet authorities handed to the Polish "senior" a so-called "nariad", i. e. a demand for 500-700 persons required for labour on that day. The Polish "senior" in turn called a conference of block commanders, who, fairly and in rotation, for the most part without regard to rank but taking into consideration age and state of health, appointed people for work. While the camp was being rebuilt, groups of officers were employed to unload timber, planks and coal at the railway station. This was very heavy work, which meant being away from the camp all day without food. The 100-200 officers detailed in rotation for this work were conducted under heavy escort along rough, winding paths to the station, in order to avoid any contact with the local population. Work outside the camp was practically discontinued after the middle of January 1940. Within the camp, officers carried out various tasks, such as maintaining general order, clearing away snow and ice, cleaning stores, and latrines, unloading food for the camp, permanently working in the bathrooms and laundries, disinfecting etc.

At Starobielsk prisoners were only used for work connected with the needs of the camp. Officers did not try to avoid work, finding that it relieved the monotony of camp life. But one of the great disadvantages of working was that clothes and footwear, particularly treasured by the prisoners, were worn out very quickly. The repeated efforts of the Polish "Headquarters" to obtain special working clothes for the prisoners were unsuccessful.

38. Starobielsk II. F. Currency, sale of valuables, shop.

Despite frequent searches many prisoners managed to hide some money and personal possessions. The majority however had only Polish zlotys, which had potentially lost their value, and having no roubles, they were unable to buy anything at the official camp shop or unofficially through Soviet officials and workmen who came to the camp to work. Some of the prisoners had received some pay in roubles, but the majority remained without any Soviet money. In the middle of December the Soviet authorities announced that in the interest of the prisoners they would give them the opportunity of acquiring roubles by selling their watches, fountain pens and other articles of value. Shortly afterwards three Soviet representatives of the State Jewelry Trust arrived at the camp. The prisoners mutually agreed not to sell their rings, crosses or medallions, but they were quite willing to part with watches, fountain pens and other articles. The official prices offered by the Trust struck the prisoners as very curious: Wrist watches fetched a fairly good price regardless of make and condition, while the best gold pocket watches were valued at very little. Fountain pens, from

expensive Parkers to ordinary Woolworth all fetched the same price—20 roubles. After the sale the prisoners were given up to 50 roubles on the spot, the balance being paid into their accounts from which they were permitted to draw out 50 roubles every month.

Before this sale, when the prisoners had been without roubles, the travelling shop, which visited the camp about once a fortnight, had usually been fairly well stocked with articles the prisoners would have liked to have been able to buy. After the sale, when there were roubles available in the camp, the number of articles for sale in the shop was greatly reduced. At each visit, therefore, the officers pooled their roubles, and having bought up the stock which was available to them, when the Russians had had their pick, they distributed it fairly between huts and individuals regardless of whether they had contributed to the pool or not.

39. *Starobielsk II. G. Prisoners' conception of their legal status and hopes of liberation.*

As the majority of prisoners at Starobielsk found themselves in captivity without having previously taken any part in battles against Soviet troops, they were unable to understand on what pretext they were detained. The legal position of Polish soldiers in Soviet hands was discussed at numerous conferences, attended by eminent Polish lawyers who were among the inmates of the camp. These conferences invariably reached the conclusion that, in view of the fact that a state of war didn't exist between the U. S. S. R. and Poland, there had been absolutely no legal justification for keeping them in captivity, and referring to them, as "prisoners of war." The terms of Lvov capitulation, guaranteeing "personal freedom" and "right to travel to neutral countries" were continually referred to at these conferences (see p. 10.)

Ignorant of the general political situation and unaware of Soviet legal interpretations (see p. 6-12.), most of the prisoners at Starobielsk gladly listened to all kinds of rumours which presaged their speedy release. One of these rumours was to the effect that the United States had consented to represent Polish interests in the U. S. S. R. and that the American Ambassador was expected to visit the camp with a delegation of the International Red Cross. This rumour was fully believed by the prisoners and at a meeting of staff officers the text of a special petition to the American Ambassador was drawn up, requesting him to arrange for the immediate release of all Polish prisoners of war so that they could join in the fighting against Germany. Fearing that the Soviet authorities would prevent them from approaching the Ambassador, the prisoners translated the petition into English and hurriedly made several copies, so as to ensure that at least one of them would come into the Ambassador's hands during his forthcoming visit. Although this rumour turned out to be entirely false, most of the prisoners still did not lose hope of being soon liberated. This hope was sustained by various rumours initiated by the Soviet officials, and by letters from Poland stating that reports of their imminent return from the U. S. S. R. were widely circulating there.

In consequence of the general anticipation of immediate release, the prisoners at Starobielsk, as at Kozielsk, greeted the announcement in April of the liquidation of the camp without surprise and in fact with considerable satisfaction.

40. *Starobielsk II. H. Evidence and investigation.*

The fact that during the whole of the time spent by the officers, prisoners at Starobielsk the Soviet authorities had been conducting intensive investigations and collecting various kind of evidence, counteracted to some extent the hopes at early liberation. Prisoners were summoned, usually at night, either to the "osoby otdiel" (Special Branch) or to the Soviet Command outside the camp.

All particulars relating to each prisoner were recorded several times, each individual being required to fill in on a printed form various details concerning his family, financial position, living conditions, occupation, with particular references to the number of workmen employed by him and the vehicles in his possession, journeys abroad, knowledge of foreign languages etc. Apart from the detailed questionnaires, interrogations also took place, "doprosy" as they were called by the prisoners. These lasted for hours on end and took the form of discussions with the interrogator, who tried to take the prisoners unaware with unexpected questions on apparently unrelated subjects. The main themes of discussion were political problems and to a lesser degree military topics. The interrogators were chiefly interested in the prisoner's party affiliations, his political outlook, his attitude to the U. S. S. R. etc. Methods of interrogation varied. Sometimes the prisoner was offered tea and cigarettes, at others the interrogator smoked good

tobacco right under his nose. Refined politeness often gave way to shouts and threats, backed up by a revolver on the table. Beating did not take place in the camp, but the more stubborn prisoners were transferred to prison.

Records were usually not kept of "doprosy" and the prisoners were warned that the discussions were strictly confidential and not to be repeated to anyone. Every prisoner without exception was summoned to an interrogation several times, and there were cases of men being interrogated literally every night for 2-3 weeks on end.

The completed evidence and the records of the "doprosy", together with photographs (one full face and two profiles) and finger prints, formed the so-called dossier of each prisoner. No one ever saw their own dossier, having no means of access to it.

As at Kozielsk, these dossiers probably contained other material concerning the individual prisoners, such as the comments of the camp authorities, particularly of the political agents, information obtained from correspondence with their families etc.

41. *Starobielsk II. I. Correspondence.*

When they first came to the camp, prisoners were not allowed to correspond with Poland. Not until the middle of December 1939, was permission granted to write once a month, provided no mention was made of conditions in the camp and no information of any other kind given except personal news. The address for reply, written in Russian, was given as: "U. S. S. R., Starobielsk Prisoner of War Camp, Post Box No. 15".

The chance to correspond with the outside world raised the morale of the prisoners, who took fresh courage on hearing from their families. The first letters arrived at the camp before Christmas 1939. From the moment of obtaining the addresses of their relations, families in Poland wrote often, thus supplying the Soviet authorities with useful information. In March 1940 at Easter each prisoner was permitted to send one telegram. That was almost the last news that came from Starobielsk. No letters left the camp after April 10th 1940, but distribution of incoming mail continued until April 26th. After that all communication ceased.

In addition to letters, over 100 parcels were sent to the camp, mostly from German-occupied Poland or from the province of Wilno. Packets of food and clothing from Soviet occupied territories never arrived, but some money orders were received, including one for 500 rubles from notorious Wanda Wasilewska for her uncle, a disabled Colonel.

42. *Starobielsk II. J. Soviet propaganda.*

As at Kozielsk, placards bearing Soviet slogans and extracts from the Stalin Constitution were posted in the Starobielsk camp. In addition political propaganda was diffused through the radio (numerous loud-speakers being set up in the grounds of the camp and in the living quarters), the Soviet press in Russian and in Polish and also films. The attendance at the films was at the outset considerable, but it decreased from day to day, as the films were of a low standard, always tendentious and often anti-Polish, based on such themes as the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 etc. The Soviet authorities attributed the poor attendance to weather conditions, and consequently transferred the film displays to the main church, after it had been emptied of grain. Nevertheless the attendance continued to fall almost to zero and, after a time the film shows had to be discontinued, which brought a severe reprimand from Commissar Kirskin.

The most popular paper among the prisoners was the Lvov "Red Standard" published in Polish, large numbers of which were sent to the camp from time to time. Verbal propaganda was carried out by political agents in discussions and lectures as well as in conversations with the prisoners on political themes. The Polish "Headquarters" endeavoured to keep the prisoners out of such discussions, but often unsuccessfully.

In general, Soviet propaganda at Starobielsk was not much of a success. Only a score or so of prisoners were in the habit of talking to political agents and using the library. The great majority were indifferent or disgusted with Soviet propaganda.

There were also at Starobielsk a few dozen prisoners of German descent who had declared themselves "Volksdeutsche." These were rigorously boycotted by most of the prisoners, but were looked upon with some favour by the Soviet authorities.

43. *Starobielsk II. Religious, cultural and social life at Starobielsk.*

On the first Sunday after their arrival at Starobielsk, large crowds of prisoners attended Mass in their respective huts. Subsequently this sort of "demonstration" was strictly prohibited by the camp authorities. But the army chaplains in the camp continued to celebrate Mass, hear confessions and give Communion in secret. After the removal of all the priests, religious life was somewhat restricted, though clandestine religious services were still held. Besides religious feasts, the prisoners also observed national festivals. On November 11th, the Soviet authorities held a special "roll-call", keeping the prisoners in closed ranks outside the camp grounds all day. Nevertheless, in the evening, discussions and speeches were held in many huts in observance of the anniversary of Polish independence. Christmas was also celebrated. The huts were decorated with Christmas trees and lighted candles, and the prisoners sang carols and broke Christmas wafers.

Many of the officers had books in their haversacks when captured. These books circulated among the prisoners and were much more widely read than books from the official Soviet library. The prisoners also organised lectures, discussions and instruction in foreign languages. As this was strictly forbidden by the Soviet authorities, a few prisoners used to watch and give warning of the approach of guards or political agents, who were in the habit of creeping up quietly and trying to catch the prisoners red-handed. A few of the prisoners sought relaxation and consolation in spiritualistic seances. Card games, though forbidden were also popular, but political agents systematically confiscated the cards.

After protracted negotiations with the camp authorities, permission was given for the formation of a camp choir, but the texts of all songs had to be first translated into Russian and censored. In practice, the translations often deviated considerably from the text, which contained various topical illusions.

44. *Starobielsk II. L. Liquidation of the Camp.*

At 9 a. m., on April 5th 1940, the Soviet Camp commandant, Colonel Berezkov, attended by several Soviet officers, arrived at Polish "Headquarters" and announced that the long expected evacuation of the camp was about to begin, and that about 200 people would leave daily. When questioned by the prisoners as to their future fate, Berezkov answered evasively that as far as he knew they were going home, not directly, but by way of dispersal points somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kharkov, Kiev and Smolensk, from whence large convoys would be sent home. Asked why prisoners, who had arrived at the camp in thousands, were to be taken away, in such small groups, the commandant answered that the war with Finland had caused a shortage of rolling stock. Berezkov also told the prisoners that the Soviet authorities would look after them properly and supply them with all the requirements for their homeward journey.

Later, the names were read out of all those included in the first party, numbering 195 persons. They were ordered to collect their things immediately and report at mid-day in the main church for a search, during the process of which they were relieved of all metal objects, printed and written matter etc. After the search, the prisoners left the church in single file and went directly to the exit gate. Those remaining in the camp gathered on both sides of the path, but Soviet guards prevented them from making any contact with the departing men.

Subsequent parties left in a similar manner. Nearly every day two Soviet N. C. O.'s came to the room of the commandant of block 20 with a list of prisoners to be included in the next party. The size of the parties varied from about 50 to 240 persons. Up to April 26th groups left almost daily. After that date there was an interval until May 2nd. As the prisoners were all the time convinced that those removed from the camp were being liberated, the delay in the departure of convoys gave rise to great agitation among the few hundred people left behind. After the convoy of May 2nd had left, there followed another interval of several days. Groups of a dozen people being subsequently deported on May 8th, 11th and 12th.

As in Kozielsk, the prisoners tried in vain to discover the principles on which the lists were drawn up. Each list seemed to contain the names of a certain proportion of officers of every rank and from each individual hut. Every block gradually emptied from day to day more or less evenly.

A systematic separation of persons of the same name, in many cases relations was also noticeable. When the prisoners protested against this, the camp authorities declared as at Kozielsk, that they had no influence on the composition of the lists, which they said were sent from the central office. The prisoners were told, that in any case it was immaterial in which group they departed, since they would "soon all meet again". As more and more prisoners left the camp, those

remaining behind grouped in the larger blocks, until on May 2nd all inmates were quartered in one block. The bearing of Soviet officers and N. C. O.'s towards the prisoners obviously changed for the worse, causing considerable anxiety among those remaining, who thought that they were being especially discriminated against.

45. Starobielsk II. M. A. Special Group.

During the preparations for departure on April 20th, 1940, after reading the normal list, comprising about 200 persons, the Soviet N. C. O. announced in a loud voice that he would now read out a special list of 65 names (normally the number in a group was not announced), who would also leave on that day but were not to mix with the ordinary convoy. They were to remain entirely separate while assembling in the church and when marching out of the camp. He also stated that this special group would not be searched in the church, but was to be present when all the departing prisoners were identified. After this announcement he read out the names on the special list. When he had carefully repeated twice each surname, christian name and rank, it was discovered that the list included one officer who was dangerously ill in the local hospital and another who had already left the camp with a previous convoy. So the special group finally consisted of only 63 people.

As nothing of this kind had ever previously occurred at Starobielsk this event naturally aroused interest and consternation among the prisoners. They were convinced that the normal groups were to be liberated, so what did the formation of this "special group" mean? They tried in vain to find out the reason for this discrimination. The proportion of ranks and of prisoners coming from this or that region of Poland was more or less the same as in previous groups; there were perhaps a few more cadet officers, of which there were barely 30 in the camp. Some of the prisoners noticed that the group included the majority of Starobielsk "Volksdeutsche" and a comparatively large number of those known as "Reds" by their fellow-prisoners. Among them was notorious Colonel Zygmunt Berling.

The special group was separated from the normal convoy immediately after leaving the camp and arrived at Pavlishtchev Bor a few days later.

In the course of the journey by way of Voroshilovgrad and Kharkov, some of the prisoners belonging to this group succeeded in exchanging a few words with a railway worker, who was cleaning the trucks at Kharkov. This worker is said to have told the prisoners to get ready to disembark, as all "your people" were taken off the train at Kharkov and continued their journey in cars. This information, however, turned out to be wrong in the case of the special group. After standing in the station for a few hours, the train moved out of Kharkov. It is noteworthy that in the church of Starobielsk a member of the special group asked a political agent why, contrary to normal practice, full particulars were being taken of all persons included in that group. The political agent is said to have answered: "I can only tell you that you are the lucky ones."

46. Starobielsk II. N. Final liquidation of the Camp.

The last party, consisting of 18 officers, left the camp on the afternoon of May 12th, 1940, after a very thorough search during which several of the officers were stripped naked. The subsequent fate of the 10 officers who remained in the camp is unknown.

The last group of 18 officers, after passing through the gates of the camp, was surrounded by numerous guards, whose behaviour towards the prisoners was exceedingly brutal. In the yard in front of the Soviet Command building, they were loaded into lorries and quickly driven to the station, where they were put into a prison truck. The guards called individual officers by name, pushed them brutally into the truck and along the corridor into the compartments. When all were inside, the barred doors and windows were covered with blankets so that the compartments were completely blacked out. The truck moved off in the early morning of the following day. While the train was in motion, the blankets were removed, but were hung up again at every halt. During several days of travelling the prisoners lost all idea of direction, but were still convinced that they were returning to Poland and wrongly assumed that they were passing through Smolensk, Minsk, etc. On May 16th the truck halted in a small station. To the surprise of the prisoners the blankets were not hung up and they were able to read the name of the station—Babinino. After a long delay they were transferred to waiting lorries. Having travelled for half an hour, during which time they were subjected to brutal treatment by the guards, they arrived at the camp of Pavlishtchev Bor, where they were well received. On arrival they were sent to the baths and then conducted into the camp grounds where, to their surprise, they

found all the members of the special group. As one night during the journey in the prison truck, two officers from Wilno, had been taken away, only 16 officers arrived at the camp of Pavlishtchev Bor on May 16th. These, with the 63 officers of the special group, made up a total of 79 prisoners who thus escaped the fate of the other prisoners from Starobielsk.

47. *Starobielsk III. (June 1940–June 1941). Transit Prison Camp.*

After the evacuation of all officers from Starobielsk, the camp was used for a year as a transit camp for Civil prisoners on their way to labour camps in the North-East. Among these prisoners were many arrested by the Soviet authorities in Poland, the majority as a result of attempts to cross the frontier in order to join the Polish Forces in the West. Many of them were Polish officers. All these prisoners remained several weeks or months at Starobielsk, after which they were formed into convoys and deported to labour camps, mostly in the far North (Kolyma).

The numbers and the population of the camp during this period were constantly changing as many convoys were coming from and going to prisons, and to labour camps. There were on an average 8,000 to 10,000 in the camp. It is reported that the total number of prisoners who passed through Starobielsk III in the course of one year amounted to over 100,000, possibly an overestimate. Among them were many Polish officers.

The reappearance of Polish officers among Soviet prisoners in labour camps in the far North of Russia after the Polish-Soviet Agreement gave rise to a false impression among Polish officials that they were on the track of Polish prisoners of war from Starobielsk II.

The last large convoy to Kolyma via Madagan left Starobielsk in June 1941. The camp was then emptied and once again entirely changed its character and purpose.

48. *Starobielsk IV. (July 1941–August 1941). Camp for Polish prisoners of war from the ranks.*

Considerable numbers of Polish prisoners of war from the ranks were kept in various camps situated in Soviet-occupied Poland and the neighbouring territories of the U. S. S. R. They were employed in building roads for instance the motor road Kiev-Lvov-Przemysl with its many branches, and airfields. In connection with this work many camps comprising in some cases hundreds and in others thousands of prisoners were transferred from one place to another according to the demand for labour. Some dozen of these camps were in existence until the outbreak of the Soviet-German war in June 1941, when they were hastily evacuated and the prisoners driven Eastwards by forced marches. They often had to march for several hundred miles before reaching areas in which the railway services were running. In the course of these marches, which lasted on an averaged about 3 weeks, many of the columns were machine-gunned and bombed by German planes. A great many prisoners, unable to keep up with the speed of the march on the extremely inadequate rations, fell out on the way. These were usually finished off by the N.K.V.D. escort.¹

The surviving prisoners were loaded into goods trucks and taken to various camps, including Starobielsk.

After their arrival at Starobielsk in the middle of July 1941, these prisoners were grouped in several different camps. After a few weeks rest, they were trans-

¹ The following camps are among those which were thus transferred: the camp accommodating about 1,400 prisoners engaged on building the Sknifov aerodrome near Lvov—prisoners were marched to Zlotonosha, from where they were sent by train to Starobielsk; the camp at Podvoloczyska, containing about 4,000 prisoners, who also marched to Zolotonosha; the camp accommodating about 1,000 persons engaged on building an aerodrome at Teofilov—prisoners marched for 26 days until they reached Zolotonosha; the camp at Brody, in which were about 1,800 persons who marched for 24 days to Zolotonosha and at Zborov were bombed by German planes—about 1,400 persons from this camp reached Starobielsk.

The following are the reports of two prisoners of war who were evacuated in this way. "On 29.6.41 we started the march via Voloczyska and Vinnica to Zolotonosha. The route is marked by our graves. Those who could go no further were just shot. We marched under appalling conditions. The heat was terrific dust and sweat formed mud on our faces and in our mouths. Anyone who tried to get a little water from ditches or holes by the roadside was beaten with rifle butts and prodded with bayonets. The inhabitants of the villages through which we passed were told we were German prisoners . . . We marched 70–80 kilometres per day". (Witness 24.)

"On 24.6.41, after the outbreak of war, Polish soldier prisoners were taken from Brody to Tarnopol via Zloczov. We marched for about 24 days . . . During the march to Zloczov the soldiers were so exhausted that many of them were left behind. These were either shot or killed with the bayonet by the Bolsheviks . . . We were attacked en route by German planes . . . 40 Polish soldiers were killed and 150 wounded. In the middle of July 1941 the surviving prisoners arrived on foot at the town of Zolotonosha". (Witness 26.)

Inmates of Soviet prisons in Poland were evacuated by the Soviet authorities in a similar manner. For instance about 2,000 prisoners from the prison in Vilejka Povlatova went on foot to Borisov in a few days.

ferred to the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. which was just beginning to be organised as a result of the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30th, 1941.

The head of the Polish recruiting Mission, Lt. Col. Wisniewski, on arrival at Starobielsk on 24.8.41 was informed that a total of 11,952 Polish prisoners of war were grouped in three camps.

From this total the recruiting commission took more than 11,000 for the Polish Armed Forces, among them 14 officers who had hitherto concealed their rank from the Soviet authorities.

According to Colonel Wisniewski the Soviet authorities stated that there was a fourth camp at Starobielsk for Poles who had voluntarily taken Soviet citizenship and were therefore not eligible for conscription to the Polish Army.

As a result of the handing over of prisoners of war from Starobielsk IV to the Polish recruiting Mission the Polish authorities were at first unaware that the officer prisoners of war from Starobielsk II were not returned to them after the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet agreement. This misapprehension was due to the fact that they were under the impression that among the Polish prisoners who rejoined the Polish Forces from Starobielsk IV were the original inmates of Starobielsk II. In fact, of course, all the officers of Starobielsk II had been removed from there sixteen months before.

CHAPTER IV. THE CAMP AT OSTASHKOV

49. *Description of the Camp*

The Ostashkov camp, lying about ten miles from the country town of the same name in the province of Kalinin (former Tver), was situated on the site of a famous monastery on one of the islands in the Seliger lake. The dozen or more buildings on this island were in a very dilapidated state (see the map at the end of PART ONE).

50. *Ostashkov I. (September–October 1939) Camp for prisoners of war from the ranks.*

In the first days of October 1939, the Ostashkov camp contained over 12,000 Polish prisoners of war, among which there were only a few hundred officers. The majority of these prisoners had been arrested in the North-Eastern territories of Poland. Besides soldiers, there were in the camp large numbers of civilians—old men, women and children. All these people were crowded together in filthy conditions in the various buildings, which were equipped with many tiers of bunks, on which a space of about 8 inch. was allowed to each individual. Most of them were without, warm clothes or, indeed, any possession having been taken off, in the clothes in which they stood up. The food was so inadequate that they were half starved. Although the camp was situated on an island in a large lake, the prisoners had difficulty in obtaining water, for drinking, not to mention for washing themselves or their clothes. In these conditions the camp was naturally swarming with bugs and lice.

As at Kozielsk and Starobielsk, the excavation of the Ostashkov camp started at the end of October or beginning of November. All civilians—old men, women and children—nearly all the private soldiers and most N. C. O.'s left the camp in groups. Some were sent home and others thrown into forced labour camps. During the second half of November a further two convoys of about 600 persons, mostly civilians and soldiers of the reserve, left Ostashkov for Brest Litovsk, where they were exchanged for Polish prisoners in German hands who had applied to return to Soviet-occupied Poland.

51. *Ostashkov II (November 1939–May, 1940). Camp for police, Military Frontier Guards, etc. A. Inmates, conditions, camp authorities, propaganda and investigations.*

When only about 500 of the former inmates remained at Ostashkov, convoys began to arrive composed mainly of officers, N. C. O.'s and men of the Intelligence Service, Military Police, Military Frontier Guard, police, prison guards and members of ex-servicemen's settlements in the North-Eastern territories of Poland. In the middle of November 1939, there were about 6,500 persons in Ostashkov. This number was more or less maintained until April 1940, with only slight variations resulting from the arrival and departure of individuals and small groups.¹

¹ Among others, Father Kantak (see above page 23) was brought to Ostashkov during the winter of 1939 and after a few weeks moved to Kozielsk. About the middle of February a group of lawyers, priests and a few dozen N. C. O.'s and officers of the police arrived at Ostashkov. Among the priests was Protestant Superintendent Potocki, who was accused of working for the Intelligence Service (see p. 78 above).

There were about 400 officers at Ostashkov of which about 300 were officers of the police, militarised in September 1939. There were also a few dozen civilians, mostly lawyers, landowners and ex-service settlers.

At Ostashkov II, as at Kozielsk II and Starobielsk II, the treatment of prisoners varied according to their rank. Senior officers lived in a separate building in better conditions. In the two rooms for staff officers there were even beds with sheets, cupboards, chairs, etc. The rest of the officers occupied bunks in not too crowded rooms. The ranks lived in worse conditions in 19 other buildings.

Staff officers were officially exempt from work, which was not absolutely compulsory even for junior officers. At the most junior officers were used for clearing away snow from the precincts of their living quarters, mostly, however, they supervised the camp workshops, where they were responsible for the discipline and work of the ranks. Polish Doctors worked in the camp hospital and clinic. The bulk of the prisoners, among whom were many qualified craftsmen, worked in the camp workshops as tailors, shoemakers, bakers, laundry hands, electricians, carpenters, locksmiths and in sawmills and smithies. Prisoners also repaired buildings and constructed dykes and bridges connecting the island with the mainland. Police-men were as a rule treated worse than the soldiers and detailed for heavier work. For work outside the camp only prisoners in uniform were used; no-one civilians clothes was allowed outside the camp for fear they should escape.

Although the number of prisoners in the camp was 50% less than in October, 1939, the inmates complained of overcrowding and dirt. About New Year some of the prisoners were issued with palliasses and blankets. The food was the same as in other camps and the prisoners found it insufficient.

At the time when representatives of the Soviet Jewel Trust came to Ostashkov, as to Kozielsk and Starobielsk, in order to buy watches and other articles of value from the prisoners, the camp shop was comparatively well stocked with foodstuffs, which were sold for very high prices. Very soon all goods were sold out, but the shop was not restocked.

As at Kozielsk and Starobielsk, propaganda was carried out through film, which were fairly popular. There was also a radio, Soviet papers and propaganda literature. Propaganda talks were held but without much success. Political agents often visited prisoners in their living quarters, started friendly conversations and discussions, played chess with them and so on. Such scenes of "fraternisation" between members of the N. K. V. D. and prisoners were sometimes photographed and even filmed.

With the consent of the Soviet commandant a choir and orchestra was organised. But as the musicians were compelled to restrict themselves to Russian songs and music, these cultural activities ceased after two performances. Although this camp contained a few intelligentsia, religious and cultural work was carried out without the knowledge of the camp authorities just as in other camps.

Officers, who were for the most part isolated from the ranks, tried to maintain contact with them, but met with strong opposition from the Soviet authorities.

The Soviet camp commandant, Borysovietz, was a 1st Lieutenant or Captain of the N. K. V. D.; he seldom came into contact with the prisoners. The person most closely concerned with the prisoners was the political director of the camp, who was also head of the group of Soviet N. K. V. D. officials responsible for the investigations. These investigations were similar in character to those in other camps. Exact biographical details of each prisoner were required by the authorities, who also tried to find out which individuals had been working for the Intelligence Service. They were particularly interested in any political activities carried out by the prisoners and in their party affiliations.

Interrogations, which were repeated several times, lasted whole days or, more frequently, nights. There some cases of individuals being taken away from the camp for further interrogation. Many prisoners were sent to camp arrest immediately after interrogation, usually for refusing too emphatically to cooperate with the N. K. V. D. The prisoners complained particularly about the last interrogation, before the liquidation of the camp, for which several dozen pupils from the N. K. V. D. school were specially brought to the camp for practice. They were exceptionally brutal towards the prisoners, abused them excessively and even beat them.

In addition, innumerable records were made concerning the prisoner's nationality, social position, the social status of their family, date of capture, knowledge of languages and foreign countries, relations or friends in Russia, etc. Photographs and finger prints were taken of every prisoner. All these details were collected in individual files, containing each prisoner's dossier.

In December 1939, permission was granted for everyone to send one letter or telegram a month to his family.

52. Ostashkov II. B. Liquidation of the camp

In the spring of 1940, rumours began to circulate among the prisoners that the camp was shortly to be liquidated and the inmates freed and "sent home". These rumours probably originated with the camp authorities. Yet another "record" was taken, concerning the prisoners' former place of employment and the nature of it and they were asked how and where they wished to settle. Enquiries were also further made about lost possessions and a special medical commission arrived to test each individual's fitness for work. Then in March 1940, Polish decorations and money, "deposited" at the time of earlier searches, were in part returned to the prisoners. All this completely convinced the inmates that they were soon to return home, particularly the police, who did not consider themselves soldiers and therefore saw no reason why they should be kept in a prisoner of war camp for the duration of the war.

In the first days of April 1940, the liquidation of the camp began. From 3.4.40 onwards, names of those to leave were read out almost daily, occasionally with a few days interval. Prior to their departure, prisoners had to go to the cinema with all their possessions for search.

After they had been searched, the prisoners were immediately taken out of the camp and either driven in lorries or marched on foot to the nearest railway station. From the moment of leaving the cinema, all contact was cut between those departing and those remaining in the camp. Hence the latter knew nothing of the method of search in the cinema or of what happened to the convoys.

In order to give a more festive air to the departure, the camp authorities organised a band to play as the convoys left. This produced an excellent effect on the prisoners. According to rumours originating from Soviet officials, the convoys travelled the Brest Litovsk in passenger coaches, were well fed and could establish contact with the local population. One of the prisoners, having heard from a Soviet official that convoys were escorted by a strong guard with machine guns and police dogs, suggested to his fellows that those leaving Ostashkov were not sent home, but were rather taken to labour camps in the North of Russia. He was derided as a scare-monger.

The daily convoys were composed of between 60 and 300 people. Prisoners remaining in the camp tried in vain to discover by what system the lists were drawn up. In each convoy there was a preponderance of policemen, who were in the majority at Ostashkov, together with soldiers, Military Frontier Guards, civil frontier guards and a few officers.

About twenty of the first convoys disappeared without trace and nothing is known of the fate of the prisoners. From the convoy of 28.4.40 alone a few dozen people were found, and it is on their reports that the fragmentary description of that convoy's fate is based.

This was one of the largest convoys, containing about 300 people. On arrival at the cinema the prisoners concerned were divided into groups of 60, according to lists, and were then searched. Articles issued to them in the camp were taken away, as well as any sharp instruments, notes and papers. After the search, each group in turn was taken over to the mainland, where they were met by a very strong guard, consisting of about 30 armed soldiers with two machine guns and a few specially trained police dogs. At the Ostashkov railway station each group was loaded separately into a prison truck. When all the groups were on board the train moved off and after a few days arrived at Viazina station. Here it stood for several days, during which time some of the trucks were taken off, with the prisoners still inside, and were sent further in an unknown direction.¹

The last truck arrived on 4.5.40 at Babinino station, where the prisoners were disembarked and driven by road to the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor.

In the group transferred to Pavlishtchev Bor were two officers of the Military Frontier Guard, a few police officers and a dozen or more privates. All the rest of this group of 60 were policemen. On account of the strict isolation of individual groups, prisoners taken to Pavlishtchev Bor knew nothing of the composition or subsequent fate of other groups of the convoy of 28.4.40.

Two further groups were transferred from Ostashkov to Pavlishtchev Bor. One, which left Ostashkov on 13.5.40, contained about 60 persons including 5 officers. But during the journey some ten or twenty sick people were separated from this group and taken to hospital under the care of an Army doctor, Captain Trzeciak. A few days later the last group of 19 prisoners left Ostashkov. In one of these groups were, besides soldiers and policemen, a few prisoners who had been evacuated by the Polish authorities in 1939 from the Holy Cross Prison in which the worst types of criminals normally were imprisoned.

¹ According to other reports these trucks went to Bologodo station. (Witness 26.)

CHAPTER V. THE CAMP AT PAVLISHTCHEV BOR (JUKHNOV)

53. *Pavlishtchev Bor I. (September–October 1939) Camp for prisoners from the ranks (see map at the end of PART ONE).*

The camp at Pavlishtchev Bor, also known as the Jukhnov camp, was one of the larger camps several times used for accommodating Polish prisoners of war in 1939–41. It was situated on the former estate of a Russian landowner. There at the end of September 1939 about 8,500 prisoners including 400 officers were held in an area of about 11 acres surrounded by barbed wire.

At that time the Pavlishtchev Bor camp was not at all adapted for accommodating large numbers of people. The inmates lived in the stables, often sleeping on the manure. There were no bunks, pillows or blankets. The food consisted of thin soup and 600 grammes of half-baked black bread once a day. There was not sufficient water even to drink, and certainly not for washing and laundry; consequently the prisoners were infested with lice. There were so few latrines, that the whole camp was fouled by excrement, infecting the water cisterns and the food, which was left lying on the ground.

Fearing an outbreak of epidemics if the prisoners were kept any longer under these conditions, the Soviet authorities began to evacuate the camp. At the end of October 1939, officers were transferred to Kozielsk and the ranks deported in groups with the assurance that they were going home. This, however, was not entirely true, for at least some of the groups from Pavlishtchev Bor were sent to the Donetz Basin, where they were compelled to work in the mines.

54. *Pavlishtchev Bor II. (April–June 1940). Camp for officers transferred from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov.¹*

When the first two convoys of officer prisoners from Kozielsk and Starobielsk arrived at Pavlishtchev Bor at the end of April 1940, the camp was empty. After the arrival, in the first half of May, of additional groups from the three camps mentioned above, the inmates of the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor numbered about 450 persons (compared to 8,500 in the preceding period). The pleasant country surrounding the camp was particularly beautiful in the spring. Prisoners arriving there for the first time were delighted; those who had known the camp in the autumn of 1939, could not believe they were in the same place, as the life of the camp was not organized quite satisfactorily.

Always convinced that they would be liberated and sent either home or to neutral countries, the prisoners did not expect to stay long at Pavlishtchev Bor. They firmly believed that they themselves and the prisoners deported from the main camps in other groups would leave the U. S. S. R. after a certain period of "psychological quarantine" and feeding up. But a few days after the arrival of the last party from Kozielsk, most of the political agents from there arrived at Pavlishtchev Bor and started "interrogations" on similar lines to those at that former camp. At first the prisoners were told that only a few additional details were required and that they, like their fellow prisoners in other groups would in fact be liberated. The political agents attributed their own presence at Pavlishtchev Bor in such large numbers to the fact that the rest of the prisoners had already been handed over to the German authorities.

But by the end of May the excitement which had prevailed among the prisoners of the prospect of their release began to die down with the realisation that they would have to remain at Pavlishtchev Bor for some time, perhaps even until the end of the war. Ceasing to believe in the assurances of the political agents that they would be shortly returning home, they also began to doubt whether their fellow prisoners had been liberated and inclined rather to the opinion that the others, like themselves, had been sent to camps similar to Pavlishtchev Bor.

As there were in all only about 450 people in the camp, the group of officers and men who had previously declared themselves to be, "Volksdeutsche" became rather noticeable, especially as they ostentatiously spoke in German and did everything they could to get themselves recalled to Germany.

There were also there some people who in the other camps had listened willingly to Soviet propaganda among them Colonel Berling. They had been careful not to reveal their Soviet sympathies while at Kozielsk and Starobielsk, but now began to let their opinions be known at Pavlishtchev Bor. The great majority of the prisoners were not in any way influenced by them.

As the "interrogations" continued, new "cases" were brought against some of the prisoners. During the short time spent at Pavlishtchev Bor, several officers

¹ See diagram at the end of PART ONE.

were taken away, most of them to prisons in Moscow. A few of these, after some months of special interrogations rejoined their fellow prisoners, who were by that time at Griazovietz.

In the first days of June 1940, a large quantity of planks arrived at the camp and the prisoners, who had not hitherto been obliged to work, were ordered to build tiers of bunks for dormitories. This indicated that the population of the camp was to be considerably increased in the near future. Some of the prisoners, skeptical about reports that the rest of the prisoners from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been "sent home" regarded this as a confirmation of their doubts and expected the arrival of at least some of their former fellow-prisoners. This expectation, however, was not fulfilled, for on the morning of 13.6.40 the prisoners were ordered to prepare themselves for departure. They travelled for several days via Moscow to the camp at Griazovietz, near Vologda (see the map—also a diagram).

Table of convoys from the main camps to Pavlishtchev Bor

Date of departure	From	Date of Arrival at Pav. Bor	Number of persons in convoy
25.4.40	Starobielsk	1.5.40	63
26.4.40	Kozielsk	26.4.40	150
29.4.40	Ostashkov	4.5.40	60
12.5.40	Kozielsk	14.5.40	95
12.5.40	Starobielsk	17.5.40	16
13.5.40	Ostashkov	18.5.40	45
16.5.40	Ostashkov	20.5.40	19

14.6.40—Approximate number of prisoners at Pavlishtchev Bor, 448.

55. Pavlishtchev Bor III (June 1940–June 1941). P. O. W. camp for former internees from Lithuania and Latvia.

After the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor had been emptied of all the prisoners a few convoys of N. C. O.'s and men, who had been interned in Lithuania and Latvia, were brought there in the second half of June and in July and August 1940. The total number of prisoners at Pavlishtchev Bor at this period was about 3,500 persons.

As in the camp for internees at Kozielsk (Lozielsk III. see p. 49), detailed "evidence" was taken regarding all those interned at Pavlishtchev Bor, Communist propaganda was also disseminated, but with very little success.

In spite of their transfer to Soviet territory the official legal status of the internees remained unaltered. The camp authorities were constantly emphasizing their strict adherence to the appropriate regulations of international law. In accordance with these regulations, during the first few months internees were used exclusively for work inside the camp. It was not until the spring of 1941 that they were sent to work outside. When this occurred the internees invoked "international regulations" and a dispute arose, which probably hastened the decision of the Soviet authorities to deport all internees capable of work, to the far North of Russia for hard labour, like ordinary criminals.

In May 1941, convoys began to leave Pavlishtchev Bor (and simultaneously Kozielsk) for Murmansk. By June 1941, the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor was already quite empty.

CHAPTER VI. THE CAMP AT GRIAZOVIETZ

56. (June 1940–September, 1941.) Officers' Camp.

The camp at Griazovietz (see the map), was first used to accommodate Polish prisoners of war, both officers and men, in September 1939, when there were about 3,000 inmates. At the end of 1939 the Poles were taken away and replaced by the Finnish P. O. W.'s; the camp being used again for Poles in June 1940 (see the diagram). The camp itself was an ancient castle around which one storied buildings had been erected after the Revolution. It was situated about 6 miles from the railway station of Griazovietz, in Vologda province.

Prisoners brought to Griazovietz from Pavlishtchev Bor on 18.6.40 lived on the whole in worse conditions than in the latter camp, but were much better off than they had been in the three large camps. Relations with the authorities were reasonably good until the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, when they considerably deteriorated.

As it was a "show camp" for Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R., Griazovietz enjoyed various privileges and a certain amount of autonomy. Particularly important from the prisoners' point of view was the fact that after a certain time they were allowed to run the camp kitchen themselves and were also permitted to grow vegetables in the camp grounds.

The "investigations" begun in the large camps and continued at Pavlishtchev Bor were still carried out at Griazovietz by the same groups of political agents, who had been transferred there along with the prisoners. In the first months at Griazovietz the political agents, as before assured the prisoners that they were to be sent home "like your friends". After a time, however, they ceased to talk in this way and the prisoners were told that they would remain in the camp until the end of the war.

Either in connection with the investigations or for some other reason, individual prisoners were from time to time taken from Griazovietz to prison for special interrogations and a few others who had been removed, at one time or another, from three large camps were brought in. During the winter a dozen or more of the 30 declared Volksdeutsche were released at the request of the German ambassador. The total number of prisoners remained at about the 350-400 throughout this period.

The majority of prisoners stayed at Griazovietz for about one year, themselves organising the life of the camp; the Soviet authorities giving them a fairly free hand. A "club" and library were opened in the camp; permission was given for books to be obtained from outside the camp and for the holding of organised instruction in various subjects; a special official, a woman was put in charge of cultural and educational activities by the Soviets.

The prisoners were not forced to work, although in principle work was compulsory for the ranks and junior officers. Prisoners were employed mostly for tasks inside the camp, particularly for clearing up the ruins of a church previously demolished. When attempts were made to use prisoners for work outside the camp disputes arose. The prisoners, appealing to international conventions and to the regulations at Kozielsk and other camps, protested against being thus employed, but the camp authorities replied that "bourgeois" rules and conventions were not binding on Soviet officials, and from time to time sent groups of them to work outside the camp.

The rather better treatment of prisoners at Griazovietz was due to the fact that it was a "show" camp and that the Soviet authorities' planned to use the prisoners for political ends. In the autumn of 1940 the formation of a red Polish Army in Russia with the help of captive officers was mooted. "Just a year ago", said Stalin in a conversation with the Polish ambassador on November 14th 1941, "I remember that it was exactly a year ago, that I spoke to Wanda Wasilewska and asked her to try to find Polish officers who would undertake the formation of a Polish Army in the U. S. S. R., I emphasise that it was a year ago, that is at the time when the nonaggression pact with the Germans was still in force. Wasilewska did not find any such officers."

At the same time as these plans of the highest state authorities of the U. S. S. R. were having a good influence on the treatment of prisoners at Griazovietz the political agents in conversation with the prisoners, began to hint delicately that the latter should not forget that they were soldiers and that they, therefore, ought to try to keep themselves in training as they might be needed in the future. Rumours of the formation of a Polish army in the U. S. S. R. were deliberately circulated in the camp.

Systematic propaganda and political action among the prisoners increased. The woman in charge of cultural and educational activities as well as numerous political agents organised frequent discussions and lectures and engaged the prisoners in "private conversations", endeavouring to convert them to the Soviet ideology and to the idea of "Polish-Soviet co-operation". These activities slowly began to produce positive results, but on a much smaller scale than the Soviet authorities had expected. This comparative success of the persistent official propaganda at Griazovietz, in contrast to its complete failure at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov was quite natural. The "pro-Soviet" group, recruited mainly from officers transferred from Kozielsk and Starobielsk, comprised about 50 persons, representing about $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the population of the large camps (8,500 persons). After the liquidation of the three large camps, all these individuals came to Griazovietz, where the number of inmates varied from 350 to 400 persons. Here, therefore the group of 50 persons represented not $\frac{1}{2}\%$ but more than 12% of the total population. This was a small minority, but a minority which was no longer a "quantite negligible", particularly in view of the support given to them

by the camp authorities. This group feeling itself to be in a stronger position at Giazovietz began to come out into the open.

While the majority of the prisoners assumed a negative attitude towards communist propaganda and boycotted the meetings and lectures, a certain number of people refused to participate in this boycott and not only ostentatiously took part in meetings arranged by the camp authorities, but openly maintained close contact with the political agents and expressed pro-Soviet sentiments in public. This led to a disturbance among the prisoners which the authorities tried to represent as anti-semitic activity, attributing it to an "anti-Soviet organisation." With the object of exposing this "organisation", the authorities arrested some of the prisoners and sent a few of them to Moscow for "intensified investigations".

The pro-Soviet group later formed itself into the so-called "Red Corner" and started to work on the Soviet political educational pattern, studying the history of the Communist Party, the Soviet Constitution celebrating the anniversaries of the Revolution etc.

After the "Corner" had been functioning for a few weeks, the attitude taken towards it by individual prisoners became more or less apparent. On 10.10.40 the authorities withdrew from the camp 7 high ranking officers who, it is believed, were willing—in the opinion of the Soviets,—to co-operate with them in carrying out their plans for the formation of a red Polish Army. In mid-November 6 more officers were taken away, most of whom had taken an active part in the work of the "Corner".

These two groups of prisoners travelled by passenger train to Moscow, where in the Butyrki prison conversations took place which will be recorded in the following Chapter. During these conversations, some of the prisoners were "disqualified" on account of their too stubborn attitude, and were transferred to a special camp at Putyvl. Here they were kept under very good conditions until June 1941. They were then sent back to Giazovietz where they remained isolated from the other prisoners until 1.8.41, that is until after the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement.

The fate of the officers who "qualified" for further discussions will be also described in the next Chapter. They, and the great majority of the prisoners realising that they were to stay at Giazoviets for some considerable time, demanded the return of the right to correspond with their families, which had been suspended since April 1940, when the evacuation of the three large camps had begun. After some delay, the authorities finally gave permission for the resumption of correspondence in October 1940, but imposed additional restrictions on the contents of letters to those imposed before in the three large camps. Prisoners were forbidden to mention the name of Giazovietz and ordered to give their address as: Moscow, General Post Office, Post Box No. 11/c-12. They were also forbidden to refer to other persons in the camp or to give any information concerning their fellow-prisoners. (Witness 5).

This last restriction was all the more embarrassing because, after the long interruption in correspondence with Poland, a shower of letters arrived from people there enquiring about the fate of fellow-prisoners and friends who had been with the Giazovietz prisoners in the large camps. It should be mentioned that from April-May 1940, letters from Poland addressed to the large camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov were returned by the Soviet postal service stamped "Retour-Parti". At first the families in Poland did not realise the meaning of this, attributing it to the probable transfer of the addressees to another camp. So when after an interval of six months some of them received letters from their relations bearing a Moscow address, the news immediately spread to others, who continued to wait vainly for news of their relations. Disturbed by the prolonged silence, many families in Poland begged their friends to ask the Giazovietz inmates for any information they could give about the prisoners from whom no letters had been received. Although it was forbidden by the camp authorities to give even negative replies, some of the prisoners nevertheless managed to make their relations understand that the persons concerned were not with them and that they knew nothing of their fate.¹

These letters from Poland confirmed the belief among the Giazovietz prisoners that, in spite of the statements of the political agents, their fellow-prisoners who had left the large camps with other convoys had not been released. Assuming that they had been sent to other camps similar to Giazovietz, and desiring to clarify the matter, they raised the question several times in conversation with

¹ One of the prisoners was asked in a letter about the fate of "Edzio, Jocio and Marcin", who had been with him in one of the large camps. In his next letter he asked the same question of his correspondent in Poland thereby making it plain that he himself did not know the answer.

representatives of the camp authorities. The answers given by the N. K. V. D. men varied. "During the time I spent at Gрязovietz", writes one of the prisoners, "the inmates often asked about the fate of their comrades from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. They always received confused and evasive answers. Major Elman was the most honest, simply stating that he could say nothing. Alexandrovitch betrayed a certain embarrassment, but, it was said, that he accepted letters addressed to the vanished people. No answers were received to these letters either in the camp or in Poland". (Witness 4.) The prisoners left no stones unturned in their efforts to clear up this question. Another prisoner writes: "When a special delegate of the N. K. V. D. arrived at the camp from Moscow, we asked him where our comrades were. He answered that there were no officers except us in prisoner of war camps and that ours was the only camp containing officers. We asked him what had happened to them, and he answered that they had gone home." (Witness 15).

From the autumn of 1940 to the late spring of 1941 the relatively tolerable life at Gрязovietz continued without any important events or changes occurring.

From June 1941 onwards, and particularly after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the conditions in the camp completely changed. First of all the number of inmates increased four fold.

On July 2nd over a thousand internees arrived from Kozielsk, as this camp had been evacuated on account of the German advance. This naturally affected the general living conditions for the worse. Political reasons were also to a large extent responsible for the deterioration.

As a result of the general military and political situation, the Soviet authorities decided to intensify the hitherto more discreet propaganda aimed at gaining the sympathy of the prisoners to the idea of joining the Red Army and, particularly, at persuading them to act as diversionary parachutists to be dropped behind the German lines. Counting on the violently anti-German sentiments prevalent among the Poles, and hoping that the activities of the specially trained agitators and of the pro-Soviet nests at Kozielsk had done something to break down the general unwillingness to co-operate with the Soviet authorities, the latter started an energetic campaign for the immediate participation of Poles in the fight against Germany. But they met with disappointment. With the exception of a few dozen individuals who, for one reason or another, had already decided to join the Red Army, the vast majority of Polish prisoners and internees firmly adhered to the viewpoint, that as Polish soldiers, they were subordinate to the orders of the Polish Government and Commander-in-Chief, whose commands they would obey without reserve, and that without orders they could take no decisions.

In vain the political agents tried to argue the illegality of the passing on of the presidency from Moscicki to Raczkiewicz and the illegal status of the Polish Government in London, formed by a "self-appointed president". The attitude of the prisoners remained unchanged.

This attitude of the overwhelming majority of prisoners and internees at Gрязovietz maintained not only towards the camp authorities but also towards a special commission which arrived from Moscow, caused the Soviets to decide—in accordance with their general pattern of thought—that it was the result of the activities of a secret anti-Soviet organisation in the camp. After reviling all officers as "fascists" and "Germanophiles", on 21.7.41 the Soviet authorities arrested about ten prisoners on charges of favouring the Germans and conducting pro-German activities in the camp. Those who remained were subjected to various repressive measures aimed at breaking their resistance.¹

One of these measures was a considerable reduction in food rations. Hunger reigned in the camp and the prisoners started catching crows and sparrows. Despite this state of affairs they still refused to make any concessions. On the contrary, their attitude became increasingly intransigent and disputes with the camp authorities were more frequent. The situation was so tense that the senior Polish officer in the camp General Wolkowicki, appealed to the camp commandant, in the name of all the officers, saying that if the former rations were not restored a hunger strike would be proclaimed and rioting might well follow.

These feverish efforts to induce the prisoners to put themselves at the disposal of the Soviet authorities, thereby providing the latter with a political trump card,

¹ Those arrested on 21.7.41 were transferred from the camp to the prison at Volodga, where they were specially interrogated in connection with the alleged pro-German conspiracy. When the representatives of the Polish civil and military authorities arrived in the middle of August 1941 in Russia and hearing of these arrests they intervened on behalf of the arrested officers. In consequence, the matter was cleared up and the groundless accusations, based in false information, had been exposed. On 19.9.41 the officers concerned were released from the Volodga prison and sent back to Gрязovietz. On 9.10.41 they left Gрязovietz to join the Polish Armed Forces then in the process of formation in the U. S. S. R.

were made at the time when the Sikorski-Maisky conversations had been in progress in London for about a fortnight. These efforts completely failed. On 30.7.41 the Soviet Government concluded an agreement with the "self-appointed and illegal" Polish Government in London. That agreement regularised Polish-Soviet relations and announced the formation of Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. After its conclusion the former normal rations were restored in the camp and the harassing of prisoners ceased. Nevertheless they were confined in the camp for almost another month, as it was not until 21.8.41 that they were officially informed of the "amnesty" and the first five people were released, the Polish ambassador in Moscow having specially asked for them. On 24.8.41 representatives of the Polish Military Authorities—General Anders and General Bohusz-Szyszko, preceded by Colonel Pstrokowski arrived at Giazovietz and the recruiting of the prisoners to the "Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R." began. They nearly all reported and were accepted, with the exception of the 10-20 remaining Volksdeutsche and a not much larger number of Red Army enthusiasts. On 1.9.41 the Soviet guards were withdrawn and for a few days the Giazovietz camp became the first camp of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R.

CHAPTER VII. "VILLA OF DELIGHT"

The tripartite German-Italian-Japanese Pact, concluded on 27.9.40 and the occupation of Rumania on 7.10.40 must have warned the Soviet Government of the approaching conflict with Germany; it was then that the highest political authorities of the U. S. S. R. began to consider the possibility of playing the Polish card.

The idea occurred to them of forming a "Polish National Army" to co-operate with the Soviets and of using for this purpose the officers and men of the Polish Army who were still in the Soviet Union. They immediately set about putting this plan in action. By order of the central authorities 7 senior officers from among the approximately 400 prisoners at Giazovietz were sent to Moscow on 10.10.1940 and the next day 21 more Polish officers from among the 2,500 internees at Kozielsk brought there from the Baltic States in the summer of 1940, were also sent there.

In Moscow both groups completely separated from one another were kept in the Butyrki prison but they were not treated as prisoners, but rather as "guests of the N. K. V. D.". It is not possible to establish from the information available whether the individuals composing the two groups were selected by the central authorities in Moscow or whether the choice was left to the discretion of the camp authorities. In any case the results of "interrogations" and "investigations" were undoubtedly taken into consideration when forming these groups, members of which were selected on the basis of two criteria: the first—rank, popularity and general ability and the second—willingness to co-operate with the Soviet authorities. These diverse criteria were unknown to the other prisoners, who were under the impression that the personnel for these groups were chosen at random.

Even the officers taken to Moscow did not realise the purpose of their journey and were therefore surprised by their reception. "At Butyrki", writes one of the members of the Giazovietz group, "we were not searched on arrival, as I expected. . . . The Butyrki commandant, a General of the N. K. V. D., told us that we were in the Butyrki prison. Another surprise was that we were given excellent bread, real butter, 6 lumps of sugar each and tea. Afterwards we had a bath and were taken to our cells. They told us that we were not prisoners." (Witness 20).

The same evening the highest officials of the N. K. V. D. had a long conversation with the prisoners, wishing to ascertain personally to what extent the people sent to Moscow would answer the purpose for which they were required. According to the account of some of the officers, they were interviewed on that day by: the Deputy Chief People's Commissar for Home Affairs (N. K. V. D.), Mierkulov; General Raykhan, number four in the N. K. V. D. hierarchy, and Colonel Jegorov.

An officer who was disqualified by the Soviet officials on the grounds of being unwilling to co-operate gives the following account of the proceedings: "Our hosts showed a certain courtesy towards us, but immediately began to talk about our attitude towards the Germans and Soviets. They wanted to find out to what extent we were prepared to fight the Germans and were interested in our outlook on the political situation in Europe as a whole—particularly with regard to Poland. They firmly denied the existence of a Polish Government in London, attempting to prove the illegality of Raczkiewicz's assumption of the office of President of Poland, and consequently the illegality of the whole Government,

formed by the "self-appointed" president. (Witness 18). Because he questioned these views, this officer was separated from his fellows and put into a cell by himself. The remaining six officers were considered eligible for further discussions and the same day were transferred from Butyrki prison to Lubianka, the internal prison of the N. K. V. D. Here for a period of nearly three weeks the heads of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs kept them under their personal observation and influence.

After numerous conversations between the highest officials of the N. K. V. D. and individual prisoners had taken place, at the end of October several collective interviews were held, first with Mierkolov and then with Beria.¹ himself. In these last discussions a concrete proposal was put forward for the formulation of "national" Polish units in the Red Army, which would co-operate with the latter and receive its help and support.

The representatives of the Soviet authorities emphasised that they were concerned with quality rather than quantity and proposed to start with one well organized and well equipped armoured division, "as strong as an armoured fist" in the words of Beria, who hoped by this description to inspire his listeners. The Polish officers present at these conversations agreed in principle to the Soviet proposal, but doubted whether it would be possible to recruit sufficient officers for the formation of a division from among their fellow-prisoners at Giazovietz. Lt. Col. Berling pointed out that at Giazovietz there was only a very small minority of prisoners-of-war from the three large camps and expressed the hope that it would be possible to find among the whole mass of other prisoners sufficient volunteers for the organisation of a division. To this Beria is said to have replied that the Soviet authorities had made a "great mistake" about the other Polish officers and that they could not be counted on for the proposed organisation of a "Polish" division.²

After their agreement to the Soviet proposals had thus been obtained, the group of six Polish officers was transferred from the Lubianka prison to a luxurious villa, later generally known as the "Villa of Delight", situated about 30 mls. from Moscow in the neighbourhood of Malakhovka.

Here the future organisers of the Polish red army were to go through special ideological and political training. Though still nominally prisoners and guarded by the N. K. V. D., they enjoyed conditions luxurious by Soviet standards: well-furnished rooms, numerous servants, good food, a well-stocked political and military library, and a wireless. Their correspondence, though censored, was in practice unrestricted and they could obtain passes for Moscow. In return for this they were obliged with the help of two Soviet political officers attached to them to read what they were given, listen to the wireless and "think".

After a few days at Malakhovka, one of the six officers began to doubt whether he was doing the right thing and having communicated these doubts to Soviet officers, he was sent back to the Butyrki prison and put into the cell occupied by the officer who had previously been disqualified. In the middle of November there arrived from Giazovietz a further six officers, whom Lt. Col. Berling had mentioned in previous conversations as suitable persons to be used for the carrying out of the Soviet plan. Lt. Col. Berling in spite of his low rank, was clearly assuming the leadership of the whole group, and shortly afterwards the N. K. V. D. appointed him "president of the Malakhovka community".

While the group chosen by the Soviet authorities at Giazovietz expanded as a result of Colonel Berling's initiative and energy, the group of internees from Kozielsk (III), designated for the same task, diminished considerably during the combing out process in Moscow. As already mentioned (page 125) from among the 2,500 internees at Kozielsk only 21 were sent to Moscow. Here like the Giazovietz prisoners, they were first confined in the Butyrki prison, where they were kept under close observation and afterwards classified. This went on for considerably longer than in the case of the Giazovietz group. After several weeks of "observation" at Butyrki 11 officers were sent to the Lubianka prison, where further observation and discussions lasted several weeks more. Five junior officers were finally chosen as "candidates" for the "Villa of Delight" and the remaining six were sent back to Butyrki.

¹ People's Commissar for Home Affairs.

² During October and November 1940, the Russians tried to draw Polish soldiers into their service. To this end conversations took place with out officers. During these discussions Lt. Col. Berling suggested that it would be possible to recruit volunteers from Kozielsk. In the presence of Lt. Col. Berling, Colonel Gorczynski, Lt. Col. Bukojenski and Lt. Col. Tyszynski. Beria replied "My s nimi dzielali bolsniu oshibku". (We have made with them a great mistake). This meant that prisoners from Kozielsk were not to be considered. At about the same time Mierkulov, discussing the same subject with me, said "u nas wysla kakaia to oshibka" (with them some mistake has occurred for us) so evidently prisoners from Kozielsk were out of question." (Witness 20.)

This selection having been made, the five "chosen" junior officers were visited in their cells on Christmas Eve 1940, by Colonel Gorczynski and Colonel Berling. The former was dressed in the full uniform of a Colonel of the Polish Army, the latter in civilian clothes. The purpose of their visit was . . . to dine with their brother officers on a day so depressing for those separated from their families in Poland. The officers were thunderstruck by this visit. When after dinner both Colonels began to speak of the formation of a Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. and of close collaboration with the Soviets, one of the younger ones firmly opposed them and expressed his indignation at such an attitude being taken by high-ranking officers. He was consequently sent back to Butyrki where he shared a cell with the two disqualified officers from Giazovietz. The four remaining officers were transported to Malakhovka. One of them gives the following description of his first impression of the "Villa of Delight": "On alighting (from the car), we were met by a group of people all speaking in Polish but in various costumes—half military and half civilian. The inhabitants of the villa received us cordially, assuring us that we would have every convenience at our disposal, even a car to take us to the cinema in Moscow. After an elaborate evening meal, served by a good-looking and well-dressed maid, we were immediately invited to Colonel Berling's room. He informed us that he was head of the group and that a great task awaited us. When I asked him whether it was possible to leave the villa he answered that I might do so at any time, but that I should be put somewhere where I would not be able to see the light of day". (Witness No. 21).

The arrival of four internees completed the formation of the "collective", which for nearly six months intensively studied the communist doctrine. Besides instruction by means of reading, listening to the radio and discussions with Soviet political officers, each member of the "collective" was required to deliver a lecture from time to time in accordance with the programme laid down. In this lecture he had to demonstrate the progress he had made in mastering the communist theory. One of the members of the "course" describes the programme and its execution as follows:—

a. Education in the communist spirit of a cadre of future commanders of Polish red units.

b. Preparation of a specially trained "nest" for future propaganda activities and political action among the Poles.

c. The basic slogan "Red Poland, the 17th Soviet Republic".

In accordance with this political programme, lectures were arranged, during which the pupils read out essays on revolutionary and communist subjects both political and military. The purpose of these essays was to convert us to the socialist regime and convince us that the capitalist regime was already on its last legs. (Witness 21).

After four months a further two "pupils" failed: the writer of the above report and another (the third) officer from the group of seven from Giazovietz. On 26.3.41 they were sent back to the Butyrki prison, where they shared a cell with the three previously "disqualified" officers. The remaining thirteen officers finished the "course" and were considered as an entirely pro-Soviet "collective".

On 1.5.31 the "pupils", dressed in civilian clothes, watched the military parade on the Red Square in Moscow.

On 25.6.41, after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the inhabitants of the villa were taken to Moscow and quartered in apartment 16, 11/22, Neapolitan Street. Here they were guarded by armed N. K. V. D. units and were forbidden to leave the apartment even during German air raids. In Moscow it was suggested to members of the "course" that they should take part in Soviet diversionary activities in Poland. No-one volunteered but they were not subjected to much pressure from the Soviet authorities who still counted on forming Polish units, of which the "pupils" were to form the political cadre. When the intransigent attitude of the majority of Giazovietz prisoners destroyed all hope of forming Polish Soviet units (see pp. 118 above) Berling informed the "pupils" in the middle of July 1941, that there would be no Polish army in the U. S. S. R. and tried to induce them to join the Red Army.

At the same time the "pupils" are said to have received Soviet passports, a grant of 1000 roubles each and permission to move about freely in Moscow. But the political situation again changed and on 30.7.41 the Polish-Soviet agreement was signed. In consequence of this the "pupils" did not go to the Red Army but reported, as Polish prisoners of war freed by the Soviet authorities, to the Polish Military Mission which arrived in Moscow on 14.8.41. They were accepted and, numbering 13 in all, were sent to organisation centres of the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R.

CHAPTER VII—SUMMARY OF PART ONE.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT P. O. W. CAMPS.

1. *Numerical Data.*

The above description of the life of Polish prisoners of war in the three large camps—Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov—was devoted mainly to the period during which those camps were used as officers' camps (Kozielsk II, Starobielsk II) or as special camps for police, Military Police and Frontier Guards (Ostashkov II).

That period extends from November 1939 to May 1940, when all three camps were evacuated as described above.

The total numbers of inmates who passed through the three camps during that time were approximately as follows:

Kozielsk.....	4, 500
Starobielsk.....	3, 920
Ostashkov.....	6, 500

14, 920

Included in this total were—

Officers.....	8, 820
Other ranks—police Military Police, military Frontier Guard (Ostashkov II).....	6, 100

Out of this total less than 400 persons were found alive these having either arrived at Griazovietz via Pavlishtchev Bor or as in the case of a certain number having been taken individually to prisons for further "interrogation" before the liquidation of the camps and subsequently released under the "amnesty" resulting from the Polish-Soviet agreement of 30.7.41.

The rest, that is about 14,500 persons, including about 8,400 officers, were not found alive.

Found alive—3%.

Disappeared—97%.

2. *Central authorities responsible for Polish prisoners of war.*

This description of the life of the prisoners in the camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov is based on reports, diaries and notes of prisoners who subsequently left the U. S. S. R.

In the nature of things the prisoners in the camps were isolated from the outside world. They did not know what was happening outside the barbed wire of the camp, and much that went on inside the camp was concealed from them. They had no knowledge of the details of the administration and organisation of the camp, the names and functions of Soviet officials, the aims and purposes of the orders issued etc. It is therefore impossible to point a clear and accurate picture of the life of the prisoners and this fact should always be borne in mind.

But there is one striking feature, namely, that in the three camps, situated several hundred miles apart, the conditions of life were very similar differing only in the small details.

In all three camps:

in November 1939, officers of the Polish Armed Forces, officers and ranks of the police, frontier and prison guards were grouped as particularly suspicious elements, both socially and politically from the Soviet point of view;

at the same time there was a general change in the attitude taken towards the officers and a marked favouring of the higher ranks, while labour regulations applicable to camp inmates in practice were not strictly enforced;

many and similar questionnaires had to be answered by the prisoners;

interrogations of prisoners were conducted along similar lines. They were political and social rather than military in character, and were of the type employed in investigations of criminal cases—a dossier was made up for each prisoner, containing the notes on his "case", photographs and fingerprints;

just before Christmas 1939, chaplains of all denominations were removed;

in December 1939, prisoners were given permission to write letters and encouraged to disclose their contacts with foreign countries;

almost simultaneously the "evacuation" of all three camps was begun, the prisoners being given the same explanation—namely that they were being sent home;

the method of "evacuation", size of parties removed and dates of departure were the same;

groups leaving on about 25.4.40 and 12.5.40 went to Pavlishtchev Bor and later to Giazovietz, all groups being treated in a similar manner during the journey;

final liquidation of the camps took place at approximately the same time.

All this goes to suggest that the Soviet commandants were subordinated to a central authority, which regulated by detailed instructions the life of the camps. At the time of the liquidation of the three camps, Soviet officials openly attributed their inability to change the composition of particular groups to the fact that their orders were issued by the central authorities in Moscow (see pp. 47, 94).

The question naturally raises: what was this authority which decided every detail of the life of the camps, and decided on their liquidation and on the fate of all the convoys, both those which finally arrived at Giazovietz and those which disappeared?

All three camps were supervised by officers of the N. K. V. D. which organised and administered them. (Starobielsk II even bore the official title: N. K. V. D. Prisoner of War Camp). On the other hand it is known that the department of the N. K. V. D. which controls all camps in the U. S. S. R. is the so-called GULAG—(Glavnoye Upravlenye Lagery—Camps Chief Command). But it appears that the three camps concerned were not controlled by the department, judging by the assurances given by General Nasiodkin, chief of the "GULAG", to a plenipotentiary sent by General Anders to investigate the case of the missing officers (see below Chapter XIII). If this declaration of General Nasiedkin is accepted, then it must be assumed that the three camps concerned were controlled by some other branch of the central N. K. V. D. authorities, one which may well have been specially created for this purpose. Whether the fate of the camps and their inmates was decided by some such unknown branch of N. K. V. D. or by some other, higher authority, it has not been possible to ascertain.

PART TWO. AFTER THE POLISH-SOVIET TREATY OF 1941. POLISH OFFICERS MISSING IN THE U. S. S. R.

CHAPTER VIII. THE POLISH-SOVIET AGREEMENT OF 30.7.41 AND THE QUESTION OF PRISONERS OF WAR

When on 22.6.41 the Germans launched an attack on the U. S. S. R., the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Sikorski, in a broadcast on 23.7.41, expressed the hope that in view of the rupture of Soviet-German relations and the cancellation of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the U. S. S. R. would go back to the position established by the Treaty of Riga,¹ this would lead to the return of normal Polish-Soviet relations and consequently to the liberation of a quarter of a million Polish prisoners of war, then rotting through inactivity in Soviet camps, who could be used to fight in the allied cause.

After this speech, which was understood by world public opinion to be gesture of reconciliation by Poland towards her recent aggressor, further demarches were made through the medium of the British Government with the object of restoring normal Polish-Soviet relations. In the course of Anglo-Soviet discussions, Ambassador Maisky, accepting in principle the idea of the formation of national armed forces in the U. S. S. R.—Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav—which would cooperate with the Soviet armies in the fight against the German invaders, proposed in this connection that respective "National Committees" should be formed in Moscow. On 4.7.41 he queried the figures relating to Polish prisoners of war in Russia given by General Sikorski in his broadcast and declared that there were no more than 20,000, at the most.

After a firm rejection by the Polish Government in London of this proposal to form a "Polish National Committee" in Moscow, a conversation between Sikorski and Maisky took place on 5.7.41. During this conversation Maisky raised the question of the Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. and asked what were the Polish Government's plans in regard to them. General Sikorski answered that approximately 9,000 officers and 191,000 other ranks in the U. S. S. R.—these figures having been given by official Soviet statistics published shortly before—would be formed into an independent Polish Army in the U. S. S. R., but that these men would be used to fight the Germans on other fronts if the Soviet Government preferred. On this occasion Maisky did not question the figures quoted by General Sikorski, but started a discussion on the

¹ Peace Treaty concluded after Polish-Russian campaign of 1920.

legal status of the future Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. and its relations with the Soviet Supreme Command.

In the course of further discussion, Maisky agreed in principle to the release of the prisoners, on condition that the Polish Government expressed its willingness to form them into an Army in the U. S. S. R. to fight beside the Soviets against the Germans. General Sikorski stipulated that the term "prisoners" should include all Poles deported from Poland and kept in captivity in the U. S. S. R., including those imprisoned for political reasons. After a long discussion, during which Maisky emphasized the complications which this would introduce, he ultimately agreed to refer the matter to his Government for final decision.

In a note addressed by the Polish Foreign Minister to Mr. Eden on 8.7.41 the immediate release of Polish prisoners of war held in captivity in camps in the U. S. S. R. was laid down as one of the fundamental conditions of a Polish-Soviet agreement. And article 4 of the Polish draft of the Polish-Soviet agreement, dated 12.7.41 stated that "the Government of the U. S. S. R. pledges itself to release immediately and treat as citizens of a friendly State all persons who were Polish citizens on 16.9.39 and are at present on Soviet territory, namely . . . those interned in concentration camps as prisoners of war".

On 17.7.41 the Soviet Government proposed that "all practical questions concerning the release of Polish citizens now held captive on the territory of the U. S. S. R. shall be solved in a constructive spirit after the resumption of diplomatic relations between Poland and the U. S. S. R.," but finally agreed to the addition of the following Additional Protocol to the Polish-Soviet agreement signed on 30.7.41:

"1. As soon as diplomatic relations are re-established the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will grant and amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U. S. S. R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds.

"2. This Protocol becomes effective simultaneously with the agreement of 30th July, 1941."

General Sikorski, broadcasting to Poland on the occasion of the signing of the Polish-Soviet agreement, pointed out the practical value of the treaty saying: "it enables us to form Polish military units from prisoners of war now languishing somewhere in Russia and longing to fight for Poland. . . . it restores freedom to all Polish citizens, whatever the pretext for their detention on the territory of the U. S. S. R. may be. . . ."

But a considerable part of Polish public opinion was very critical of the *text* of the agreement. In particular, the wording of the Additional Protocol gave rise to very great objections and many Polish politicians and publicists questioned the use of the term "amnesty" with regard to prisoners of war. Doubts were also expressed as to whether, in view of the wording of the Additional Protocol ("dostatochnye osnovaniya—adequate grounds"), all Polish citizens held in the U. S. S. R., on whatever pretext, would in fact regain their liberty. Dissatisfaction with the text of the July agreement was in fact so wide-spread that some ministers resigned from the Government.

After the arrival of Mr. Rejtinger in Moscow on 11.8.41 as Polish Chargé d'Affaires, the whole Soviet press announced on 12.8.41 that the President of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. had issued a "ukaz" (decree) granting an amnesty to Polish citizens in captivity on the territory of the U. S. S. R. But the text of the decree was not published in the official "Sobranie zakoneny" (Statute Book). When the Polish Embassy in the U. S. S. R., approached the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) with a request for the authentic text of the decree of 12.8.41., they were presented with a document which read as follows: "To grant an amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U. S. S. R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds."

"President of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R.

(signed) M. KALININ.

"Secretary of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R.

(signed) A. GORKIN.

"Moscow, Kremlin, 12th August, 1941."

It will be seen that this document repeats word for word the last part of article 1 of the Additional Protocol to the Agreement of 30.7.41., without giving either definitions of the terms used, or any details of the execution of the general principle proclaimed in the Additional Protocol and in the Decree. Practical instructions were undoubtedly given to the Soviet authorities in secret orders, but they

were not made available to the Polish authorities, who were thus deprived of any control over the actual interpretation and execution of the general principle expressed in the Decree.

CHAPTER IX. RELEASE OF POLISH SOLDIERS IN THE U. S. S. R.

The first steps in the formation of a Polish Army in U. S. S. R. which made it practically possible for the Polish servicemen to be released from P. O. W.'s camps followed immediately on the conclusion of the Military Agreement made in Moscow on 14.8.1941 by General Bohusz-Szyszko who had travelled from London for that purpose.

General Anders who, after being several times wounded, fell into the Russian hands in October 1939 and had been held in Soviet prisons in strict isolation since that time, was appointed C. in C. of the Polish Armed Forces in U. S. S. R. by General Sikorski with the approval of the Soviet authorities, at the first meeting of the joint Polish-Soviet committee for the organisation of the Polish army on the territory of the U. S. S. R., on 16.8.1941, he demanded to know how many Polish servicemen in Soviet captivity would be counted on for the formation of the Polish Army. The Soviet representative, General Panfilov replied that, according to figures in his possession, servicemen of the former Polish Forces were concentrated mainly in three centres:

1. in the camp at Gрязovietz—about 1,000 officers.
2. in the camps at Juza and Suzdal—about 10,000 other ranks.
3. in the camp at Starobielsk—about 10,000 other ranks.

General Panfilov added that there were a certain number of Polish citizens in Siberia and in the Urals, and that the exact figures would be announced later.

Although the figures quoted by General Panfilov which corresponded exactly to those given by M. Maisky on 4.7.41. (see p. 138) were at complete variance with those in possession of the Polish authorities and given by General Sikorski in his conversation with Maisky, the Polish members of the joint commission did not draw attention to this but merely noted it.

A few days later, representatives of the Polish Headquarters in the U. S. S. R. visited the camps specified by the Soviet authorities with the object of recruiting the Polish officers and men held there.

At the Gрязovietz officers' camp their reception was particularly ceremonious. On 25.8.41. General Anders and General Szyszko-Bohusz arrived by air, accompanied by a Soviet Liaison Officer, N. K. V. D. General Zhukov. After the generals had been enthusiastically welcomed and speeches had been made, the recruiting committee began its work on the basis of a nominal list of prisoners provided by the camp authorities, according to which there were at Gрязovietz about 350 prisoners from the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov and 1,250 internees from Lithuania and Latvia.

On 24-25.8.41 Colonel N. Sulik took over the Polish prisoners in the Suzdal camp, from where the Polish recruiting commission drew, 1,962 soldiers for the Polish Armed Forces, including 19 officers who had hitherto concealed their rank from the Soviet authorities.

On 26.8.41. Colonel Sulik began to take over the prisoners of the camp at Talitza, where there were about 10,000 of them, among whom a few dozen officers were also found.

Both these camps were formed by the Soviet authorities in July, 1941, for other ranks and police who had been transferred from Kozielsk III (see p. 53 above) to the Far North, some to the Komi Soviet Socialist Republic and some to the Kola peninsula, from where they were withdrawn after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war.

Lt. Col. Wisniowski went to Starobielsk, where he found in three different camps about 12,000 Polish prisoners, withdrawn from numerous labour camps in South-Eastern Poland after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war (Starobielsk IV., see pp. 98-99).

On 30.8.41 General Anders, in a broadcast from Moscow, told the world of the formation of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. On 7.9.41 he sent from Buzuluk, where the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces had been established, a report to General Sikorski in London informing him that the Polish prisoner of war camps at Gрязovietz, Suzdal, Juza and Starobielsk had been liquidated by the Soviet authorities and that Polish soldiers from these camps, numbering 1,800 officers, 27,000 other ranks, were already on their way to Polish military camps in the Volga region. The numbers given in this report were too optimistic as in fact barely 1,400 officers left those camps and these mostly had been former internees in the Baltic States in 1939.

General Anders and his staff hoped to receive a much larger number of officers from prisoners of war camps, and opened discussions on this subject with General Panfilov. He was assured that the rest of the Polish officers had long ago been released from the P. O. W. camps and had returned home, or in some instances had voluntarily joined the Red Army.

Later on General Anders and the officers who had arrived from London gradually learnt from prisoners liberated from Giazovietz, details of the liquidation of the officers' camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in April and May, 1940. The Giazovietz prisoners told of the convoys which left the three camps, of the first report that those convoys were to be sent to Poland and of the later conjectures that the deported Polish prisoners had not been released, but probably kept in camps similar to Giazovietz. As the Soviet authorities had on several occasions used the Starobielsk and Kozielsk camps for accommodating various categories of Polish prisoners of war and other prisoners, it was at first difficult to grasp the details of the history of the prisoner of war camps for officers /Kozielsk II and Starobielsk II/, especially in view of the fact that after the agreement of 1941, the Soviet authorities handed over about 12,000 Polish soldiers from the liquidated camp at Starobielsk (Starobielsk IV).

Officers at Polish Army Headquarters in the U. S. S. R. soon realised that many officers who were personally known to them and who, they knew for certain, had been taken prisoner by the Soviets in September 1939, were still missing. Among these were nearly all those of General Anders' 1939 group, including his chief of staff, Major Soltan; nor was there any sign of Major Fuhran, for many years General Sikorski's adjutant; many other Generals and Colonels were also missing. From the very beginning Polish officers drew the attention of the Soviet liaison officers to these facts. The letter intimated that they were not in a position to supply any positive information about individuals and reverted to the old theory, semiofficially put forward in the large camps at Pavlishtevy Bor and Giazovietz, that a considerable number of Polish prisoners had been released and sent back to Poland in 1940.¹

The Polish authorities let this explanation pass, but they knew from letters received by the Giazovietz prisoners from their relatives in Poland that the missing officers had not returned home. The Polish authorities therefore instructed the Polish Underground Movement to find out whether these officers, after being handed over to the Germans, had not been held in German prisoners of war camps.

Simultaneously a special section was formed at the Polish Headquarters in the U. S. S. R. with the task of drawing up lists of the names of the missing officers and collecting all available information about them. With this object all prisoners from Kozielsk II, Starobielsk II and Ostashkov II, who had passed through Giazovietz or prisons before being released, were requested to supply all possible personal details of their fellow-prisoners who had been with them in these camps and had subsequently disappeared. In this way a list of names of missing officers from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov was gradually drawn up. Simultaneously the volunteers who joined the Polish Army after being liberated as a result of the "amnesty" from prisons and labour camps in the most distant parts of Russia were being asked if they had any information to give about the missing prisoners from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. This resulted in a misunderstanding owing to the fact that the Soviet authorities had used these camps on several occasions for other categories of Polish prisoners and prisoners of war, including a large number of officers. Many former prisoners, particularly those returning from distant northern camps (e. g. at Kolyma and in Yakuta) stated in good faith that a large number of Poles, including many from Kozielsk and Starobielsk, still remained in the extreme North, and even on islands in the Arctic Ocean. Some gave the names of officers who had, for instance, been at Starobielsk and were now in the most distant and hardest labour camps. After checking this information it was generally found that the officers named in these reports had actually spent a certain time in one of the big camps (mostly in Starobielsk III), but not at the period when these were being used as officers' camps.

In spite of the disappointments resulting from a more thorough analysis of the reports concerned, the "optimists" still continued to have hope and at that time (October–November 1941) maintained that the destinations to which the missing convoys had been transported in 1940 were so distant that for technical reasons it was impossible for the people to return at that time of year. Supporters of this

¹ "The Soviet authorities have declared to me on more than one occasion that considerable number of the above (missing) officers were released and sent back to Poland in the autumn of 1940" wrote General Anders in a letter dated 1.9.41 to the Polish Ambassador in the U. S. S. R.

theory generally assumed that the missing officers would return in the summer of 1942, when climatic and technical conditions would make it possible to travel.

The divergence between this theory and the statement of representatives of the Soviet authorities was put down to Soviet unwillingness to admit to their new allies that they had deported prisoners of war under exceptionally hard conditions to the extreme North.

This theory was further supported by the fact that it had recently become known that, in spite of the Soviet authorities' categorical statements to the effect that all Poles had been released, a very large number of Polish citizens were still detained in prisons and labour camps. Noting the inaccuracy of Soviet declarations regarding ordinary prisoners, Polish circles became increasingly convinced that the declarations concerning the missing prisoners of war from the three large camps also deviated from the truth. In consequence, the Polish authorities, while persistently trying to persuade the Soviet authorities to disclose the whereabouts of the missing prisoners of war, confidently expected them to reappear in the summer of 1942, when climatic conditions would permit them to cross the northern seas.

CHAPTER X. THE AMNESTY FOR POLISH PRISONERS AND DEPORTEES IN THE U. S. S. R. AND ITS EXECUTION

On the basis of information received from Poland, the Polish Government in London estimated the total number of Polish citizens deported by the Soviet authorities in the years 1939-1941 at 1½-2 millions. Owing to the "iron curtain" isolating the Soviet state from the rest of the world the Polish Government possessed no detailed information as to the whereabouts of the deportees in particular provinces of the U. S. S. R. nor as to their living conditions and legal status. After the conclusion of the agreement of 30.7.41 it was assumed that as a result of the Additional Protocol, these masses of human beings would automatically regain their freedom and civic rights and would be in great need of help from Polish diplomatic representatives appointed to the U. S. S. R.

The Polish diplomatic representatives fully realised the technical difficulties of immediately releasing hundreds of thousands of people dispersed throughout the immense territory of the U. S. S. R. and of changing their legal status.

The first diplomatic note sent by the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Moscow, M. J. H. Rettinger, on 22.8.41, requested the "immediate release from prisons and forced labour camps of all Polish citizens and their despatch to provisional assembly points, where they could be sorted out according to sex, age and physical and professional qualifications and directed to military camps or to industrial or agricultural work". At the same time the note pointed out that the burdening of local administrations with countless additional military tasks might in many cases obstruct the "efficient and speedy" fulfilment of the obligations contracted by the U. S. S. R. In this connection the note put forward various "proposals" concerning "provisional instructions for the purpose of expediting the realisation of the clauses of the amnesty" by means of active "cooperation between administrative sections of the Embassy and the Polish citizens in question". Finally the note expressed the conviction that "in the present harmonious relations between the Polish and the Soviet Governments it will be easy to work out the details and bring about the speedy release of Polish citizens, if only general instructions are issued". Replying to this note, the N. K. I. D. (Peoples' Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) in a "Pro Memoria" of 28.8.41, informed the Embassy that, in the accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. dated 12.8.41, the release of all Polish citizens from prisons had already begun. The memorandum also described the procedure governing the release of prisoners. While raising no objection to the "appointment of trustees of the Polish Embassy in regions inhabited by large numbers of Polish citizens" or to the "formation of one or several joint commissions, composed of Soviet delegates and representatives of the Polish Embassy, for the purpose of drawing up a register of Polish citizens, resettling them and providing them with a means of livelihood", the memorandum deferred all the other propositions contained in the Polish note for consideration "during subsequent work".

The procedure mentioned in the memorandum was as follows: released prisoners were to receive special amnesty certificates (udostoviereniya) in which they were clearly described as Polish citizens. Those certificates would be valid for three months, after which they were to be exchanged for a passport. In addition, the liberated prisoners were to receive free railway tickets to a place theoretically chosen by the prisoner but in practice dictated by the authorities—as

well as a travelling allowance of 15 roubles a day. The memorandum mentioned no general principles governing release; on the contrary, the phrase "the release has begun" indicated rather that Polish citizens were not automatically set free. Later it became clear that prisoners were freed under a number of special orders issued by the Soviet central authorities. It should be pointed out that in the first period (August–October) the Soviet authorities never questioned the Polish citizenship of non-Polish persons at the time of release of prisoners. On the contrary it even seemed that they gave special privileges to some of the so-called national minorities and, in fact released Jews, while detaining Poles.

On 9.9.41, five days after the arrival of M. Kot as Polish Ambassador in Moscow, the first meeting of the Joint Polish-Soviet Commission took place and was devoted to "the question of further arrangements concerning liberated Polish citizens". At the beginning of the meeting, at the request of the Polish delegates, the Soviet representatives supplied information as to the total number of Polish citizens detained in the U. S. S. R. and the progress so far made in releasing them. With the reservation that the exact numbers could only be submitted after checking, the following approximate figures were given: the number of Polish citizens imprisoned in prisons and camps "can be more or less calculated at 42,000, of which 35,891 were freed up to 8.9.41. The total number of deported and re-settled Polish citizens may be estimated at 300–350 thousand persons, of whom up to 8.9.41, 107,933 have been supplied with documents entitling them to move freely on Soviet territory".¹

In the course of discussion the Soviet representatives admitted that not all Polish citizens had been freed but stated that those detained were "only a few Poles, who are accused of espionage for Germany". The Polish request for the production of material collected during investigations of these cases raised fundamental objections from the Soviets; the difference in the points of views taken by both sides became obvious when the Poles asked whether the figures given by the Soviets included all the Polish citizens living in the territory of the U. S. S. R. The Soviet delegates immediately raised the question of the citizenship of "former Polish citizens who inhabited the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia and who after the incorporation of these territories into the Soviet Union received Soviet citizenship". Discussion of this question was postponed since it obviously did not fall within the competence of the Commission.

On 10.9.41 Ambassador Kot had his first conference with the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyshinsky, in the course of which the Ambassador stated that many Polish citizens deported to the U. S. S. R., and in whom he was particularly interested, had so far not reappeared, and asked to whom he should refer this matter. Vyshinsky replied, "We will deal with that, if you will supply a list of persons with whom you are concerned; we shall settle that question as favourably and as quickly as possible". The Embassy consequently handed the N. K. I. D. (U. S. S. R. Foreign Office) a "list of persons to be released in the first instance" comprising a few hundred names among them those of some prisoners of war, mostly university professors, who had been at Kozielsk or Starobielsk. In the course of some months the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) informed the Embassy of the release of 54 persons whose names had figured on the list, but there was no-one from Kozielsk or Starobielsk among them.

On 17.9.41 the second and last meeting of the Joint Commission took place, during which the Soviets gave the number of Polish citizens released from prisons and camps up to 14.9.41 as 46,195 that is 7,000 more than the total number of Polish citizens who were imprisoned in the U. S. S. R. according to the figures they had given at the first meeting.

Having established the fact that many prominent Polish citizens known to have been in Soviet prisons and camps were not among the liberated prisoners, Ambassador Kot again raised this matter on 20.9.41 in a conversation with Vyshinsky, who promised to investigate the whole question of releases and to produce detailed information in the immediate future, concerning Polish scholars, artists, publicists, doctors, lawyers etc. then in the U. S. S. R. A week later as a result of the flood of complaints reaching the Embassy about Polish citizens still kept in detention, on 27.9.41 the Ambassador handed to the N. K. I. D. Foreign Office the first note which pointed out that:—

- a. many Polish citizens were detained, individually and in groups, in forced labour camps and prisons;
- b. they were prevented from establishing contact with the Polish Embassy;

¹ Extract from the Soviet protocol of the meeting.

- c. many other Polish citizens were denied the right to choose or change their place of residence;
- d. they were compelled to work as prisoners;
- e. certificates of amnesty were refused to them.

During the next conversation with the Polish Ambassador on 6.10.41 Vyshinsky repeated his promise to look into the whole question of releases and to supply a list of members of the Polish intelligentsia deported to the U. S. S. R. This promise, however, was never fulfilled, but in a conversation with the Polish Ambassador on 14.10.41 he gave the following general figures concerning the fulfilment of the Additional Protocol granting an amnesty to Polish citizens:—

“the 387,962 former Polish citizens deprived of liberty in the U. S. S. R. fell under the following categories:—

Cat. I. (condemned or under investigation in prison).....	71, 481
Cat. II. (deported to places of compulsory settlement).....	291, 137
Cat. III. (prisoners of war).....	25, 314
Of the above categories up to 1.10.41 were released.....	345, 511
Persons still detained.....	42, 421”

Although the figures given by Vyshinsky were considerably higher than those submitted to the Poles at the meetings of the Joint Commission, they were firmly questioned by Ambassador Kot as being too low. In the course of a heated discussion on this subject, Vyshinsky, admitting that the Soviet authorities had deported limited groups from Poland “but not the entire population”, stated that “he could only give the Ambassador the figures “which were in his possession” and finally asked him to send to the N. K. I. D. Foreign Office in writing, details of cases where local authorities were neglecting to carry out the amnesty.

The above figures were the last to be supplied by the Soviet authorities concerning the deportation from Poland. Poles were convinced that they represented about 25–30% of the actual numbers. It should be pointed out that—as was revealed in the course of discussion with Soviet representatives—the figures given by Vyshinsky did not include so-called former Polish citizens” who allegedly became “Soviet citizens” on the strength of the Soviet decree of 1.11.39, i. e. members of Poland’s national minorities—Ukrainians, White Russians, Jews etc. Nor did Vyshinsky’s figures include deportees and prisoners of war who had died in the meantime, the mortality rate being of course extremely high among people deported and living under such hard conditions. If these two statements are taken into consideration it will be seen, that the original Polish estimation, that the Soviets had deported about 1½ million people from Poland was not far from the truth.

Comparison of Soviet statements concerning numbers of Poles detained in the U. S. S. R. and freed after the amnesty

Source	Date	Categories detained and freed after amnesty					
of information		in prisons and camps		deportees		P. O. W.’s and internees	
		Total No.	Re-leased	Total No.	Re-leased	Total No.	Re-leased
Krasnaia Zvezda (“Red Star”)	17.9.40					5,268 officers, 4,096 N. C. O.’s, 181,223 other ranks.	
U. S. S. R. Ambassador in London Maisky.	4.7.41					Approx. 20,000.	
General Panfilov.....	16.8.41					1,000 officers, 20,000 other ranks.	
N. K. T. D. (Foreign Office) Novikov.	9.9.41	42,000	35,891	{ 300,000 to 350,000 }	107,933		
N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) Novikov.	17.9.41		46,195		159,512		
N. K. I. D. Vice Commissar Vyshinsky.	14.9.41	71,481		291,137		25,314	
of these three categories a total of 345,511 have been released.							

CHAPTER XI. POLISH DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTIONS CONCERNING THE FULFILMENT OF THE "ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL" AND IN THE QUESTION OF THE MISSING POLISH OFFICERS.

The Kot-Vyshinsky conversation of 10.9.41 and the Polish Ambassador's note of 27.9.41 (see p. 153-4 above) opened a long series of discussions and diplomatic notes concerning the fulfilment of the clauses of the Additional Protocol to the Agreement of 30.7.41. The Polish authorities never failed to insist on the strict application of the clauses of the Protocol and the release of all Polish citizens without exception. The Soviet replies varied. They either said that all Polish citizens were being liberated or, after 8.11.41, that they all had been liberated, or, that a certain number of persons reclaimed by the Poles were detained as criminals or German spies, or that the amnesty did not apply to those still in captivity as they were not Polish citizens.

In this connection discussions took place on:—

a. the citizenship of persons of various domiciles and nationalities who were in the Eastern territories of Poland on 1-2.11.39, i. e., when those territories were "incorporated" into the Soviet Union by the decisions of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R.;

b. the right of the Polish authorities to have access to the evidence on the basis of which individuals were detained as common criminals or German spies.

The fact that the Soviet replies admitted the detention of some Polish citizens confirmed the opinion current in Polish circles that a considerably larger number of Polish citizens than that admitted by the Soviet authorities had not regained their freedom, despite the clauses of the Additional Protocol.*

Still not questioning the good will of the Soviet central authorities, Polish representatives presumed that the reason for the continued detention of numerous Polish citizens was either the unscrupulousness of local prison and camp authorities or the insurmountable technical difficulties of transporting them from the extreme North of Russia.

It will be remembered that both the Polish Army Headquarters in the U. S. S. R. and the Polish Embassy had for a long time been aware that a considerable number of Poles, including prisoners of war from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been deported to the Far North in the summer of 1940. Recognising the technical difficulties making their return before the summer of 1942 impossible, the Polish representatives tried to obtain official confirmation from the Soviets of the detention of Polish prisoners in camps in the Far North. But they received only negative and often vague replies.

The various stages of the diplomatic negotiations on this subject are given below.

1. 6.10.41—*Kot-Vyshinsky conversation.*

During this conversation the Polish Ambassador for the first time raised officially the question of the missing officers. Unfortunately however, the facts he represented were not correct and by going into too great detail he missed an important opportunity to obtain from the Soviet Authorities a direct answer to the dramatic question—What has happened to 7,500 people? This will be seen from the notes of the conversation which follows:—

Ambassador: . . . "besides this category of persons to be individually released and the search for well-known scholars and politicians in whom, as individuals, public opinion takes a great interest, there are other questions in this sphere which are very distressing for us. These concern whole groups of people and I venture to give you some facts about them which may not be known to you."

Vyshinsky: "The lack of information about the prisoners sometimes results from the fact that when the Germans occupied part of the territory of the U. S. S. R. the prisons and the archives were evacuated separately."

(Novikov intervenes and gives examples of cases where this has occurred.)

Ambassador: "Apart from the fact that I can't carry out my orders from London to sent there some well-known people to complete the membership of the National Council, I would like to quote to you the following figures. In all there were 9,500 officers arrested in Poland and deported to the U. S. S. R. and we have now in the army in U. S. S. R. only 2,000 officers. What has happened to the other 7,500 people?"

Vyshinsky and Novikov try to maintain that that is not possible, but cannot find any arguments to support their case.

Ambassador: "We have made every effort to find these people. We thought they were handed over to the Germans, we looked for them in German P. O. W. camps, in occupied Poland, everywhere where they could possibly be. I could

understand it if it were a matter of a few dozen or even a few hundred people missing but not thousands.

Vishinsky and Novikov disconcerted, themselves put the question "What has happened to them?"

Ambassador: "In the Autumn of 1940 a shipload of about 1500 of our officers was sent from Archangel to the North."

Vishinsky: "That is surely an inaccurate report. Where does it come from?"

Ambassador: "From Archangel. In the Moscow province there was a P. O. W. camp at Ostashkov where there was exclusively men from the Military and civil police. This camp doesn't exist any longer, however, among many thousands of people who have joined our ranks there is not one from this camp. And the camps where our officers are still kept are on the Sosva, at Kolyma not far from Omsk."

Vishinsky: "Surely they are among the more than 300,000 Polish citizens who have now been released."

Ambassador: "From these camps there is no one in the Army and what about the doctors and university professors?"

The Ambassadors assertions about the shipload from Archangel and the Officers camp on the Soswa etc., were based on reports of prisoners who had been liberated from Soviet labour camps and joined the Polish Armed Forces. But these reports were themselves based on a misunderstanding, as was pointed out above (p. 148) for they concerned the officers from Starobielsk III. Formulated categorically by the Ambassador, these assertions laid the "burden of proof" on the Polish side and enabled the Soviets to evade the question "what had happened to 7,500 people" and to limit themselves to a denial of particular Polish statements.

2. 13.10.41. *Polish Embassy's Note to N. K. I. d.*

In the note of 13.10.41 the Embassy did not refer expressly to the disappearance of officer P. O. W's but treated the matter in general terms.

This note stating that "the Embassy possesses information that in various prisons and camps there still remain thousands of Polish citizens who either know nothing of the Agreement concluded on July 30th, 1941, or have been informed that the clauses of that Agreement and the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. of September 12th do not apply to them". The note went on to hope that the real situation of Polish citizens in U. S. S. R. would correspond to that proclaimed by the official communiqués of PAT (official Polish Telegraph Agency) in London and New York which were giving an assurance, in accordance with the policy of Soviet-Polish friendship and co-operation, that all Polish citizens in U. S. S. R. were now released. Emphasising in this way the genuine good will of the Polish Government in the sphere of propaganda, the note did nevertheless draw the attention of the Soviet Government to these communiques of PAT which in no way corresponded to the facts as set out in it or to the real situation.

3. 14.10.41. *Kot-Vyshinsky conversation*

In the course of this conversation the Polish Ambassador, referring to General Sikorski's proposed visit to Moscow, stressed the need for bringing the actual situation of Polish citizens in the U. S. S. R. into line with the Polish Telegraph Agency's communiqués. He ended with the words: "At the moment of General Sikorski's arrival, not one Polish citizen ought to be in detention."

Vyshinsky then raised the whole question of the release of Polish citizens and supplied the figures (quoted at the end of the preceding chapter) and a sharp exchange of views took place as to the numbers deported from Poland (see p. 155). The Ambassador referring again to the missing officer prisoners of war, stated that "according to Soviet data there were 9,600 officers in prisoner of war camps". The Ambassador was doubtless thinking of the article in "Krasnaya Zvezda" ("Red Star") which have the number of prisoners of war as: 5,268 officers and 4,096 N. C. O's—more than 9,000 in all (see p. 14). Towards the end of the discussion the tone became more friendly.

Ambassador: "I hope that when General Sikorski arrives he will find all his officers."

Vyshinsky: "We shall give up to you all the people we have, but we cannot give up those who are not with us. The English, for instance, give us the names of their people who are supposed to be in the U. S. S. R., but who have in fact never been here."

4. 15.10.41. *Personal note from General Sikorski to Ambassador Bogomolov.*

The Polish Embassy's difficulties in the U. S. S. R. connected with the fulfilment by the Soviet authorities of the Additional Protocol had their repercussions in

London. The Polish Government in London was kept informed by the Embassy and by the Polish Military Authorities in the U. S. S. R. of the progress made in releasing Polish citizens from Soviet camps and prisons. The information at first supplied by Soviet liaison officers, to the effect that prisoners of war from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been freed and sent home in 1940, was sent via London to Poland to be verified. The Polish Underground Movement reported that the missing officers were neither in their homes under German occupation nor in German prisoner of war camps and that their families had lost all contact with them since April and May, 1940. Disturbing reports and rumours also came from the U. S. S. R. to the effect that a considerable number of Polish citizens had not been released from captivity but had been transferred to the extreme North of Russia. In consequence, General Sikorski, before his projected visit to Moscow, wrote a personal note to the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish Government, requesting him to inform his Government that the Polish Government "appreciates the good will shown by the Soviet Government in putting into effect the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30th", and simultaneously drawing attention to "certain obstacles which had arisen and could not be attributed to difficulties resulting from military operations."

Emphasising the necessity for the immediate release of Polish citizens in view of the approaching winter and the need for providing them with a means of livelihood, the note contained a few additional sentences on the subject of the missing officers, expressing the supposition that they were detained in the Far North. "Le sort de quelques milliers des officiers polonais, qui ne sont pas nentres en Pologne et qui n'ont pas été retrouvé dans les camps militaires soviétiques continue a être incertaine. Ils sont probablement dispersés dans les régions du nord de l' U. S. S. R. Leur présence dans les camps de l'Armée Polonaise est indispensable".

5. 22.10.41.—Kot-Molotov Conversation

The subject of this conversation was the visit of General Sikorski to the U. S. S. R. The Polish Ambassador again pointed out the necessity for completely putting the "amnesty" clauses into full effect: "First the question of the amnesty. The instructions of the central authorities clearly did not reach several regions. They must be carried out 100%, so that General Sikorski can see that our agreement is a real one."

At Molotov's request for a complete account of the whole question, the Ambassador recalled his conversations with Vyshinsky. "I gave Mr. Vyshinsky several examples of places where the amnesty has not been carried out and of which categories of our citizens, such as officers, judges, public prosecutors and police have not been released. Mr. Vyshinsky promised to give the matter his attention, but he did not fulfill his promise. I am afraid that the approaching winter will make impossible their return from distant territories such as Kolyma."

Molotov replied that in principle all Polish citizens had been set free as a result of the amnesty but admitted that on account of "great difficulties of transport and administration . . . in several districts they undoubtedly still remained in places where up till this time they have been living."

These general remarks of Molotov, which in reality conveyed nothing, were understood by the Poles to be a more or less official confirmation by a member of the Soviet Government of the Polish thesis, that the missing officers were in the Far North and had for technical reasons no possibility of returning at that time. Thanking Molotov for his promise to extend "to the Polish Government all the assistance in our power towards solving this matter", the Ambassador asked for a list of the places in which Polish citizens who had been released were living. "We understand the difficulties of the Soviet Government", he added, commenting on his request, "but if we knew something about our citizens we could wait quietly for the possibility of transport."

Promising to do everything to enable the Ambassador to acquire this information, Molotov proposed that Kot should hand him a list of names of "the people with whom you are particularly concerned" and expressed the hope that after the issuing of "all instructions on this matter, there will be no difficulty provided they are in the U. S. S. R. under the same names as they bore in Poland."

The fact that the Ambassador had in mind all the time the question of the missing officers from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov—though he did not speak openly of them—is shown by the further course of the conversation. Referring to the difficulties of tracing individuals, he mentioned exclusively the names of the missing officers. The conversation ran thus:—

Ambassador: "It would be a very good thing if I could get into close contact with representatives of the N. K. V. D. concerning various matters which do not

really come into the sphere of foreign affairs and are an additional burden to you. Actually they are not difficult to solve, but they are involved. As an example let me cite the impossibility of finding General Sikorski's adjutant, to whom the latter is very attached."

Molotov: "Is he with us?"

Ambassador: "He was in a prisoner of war camp in the U. S. S. R. and was afterwards deported into the interior of Russia".

Molotov: "What is his name?"

Ambassador: "Major Jan Fuhrman".

Molotov: "Everything will be done to find him."

(Molotov ordered the interpreter to write down Fuhrman's exact name.)

Ambassador: "If by any chance he is unfortunately dead, we should like to be informed of this, for there is nothing worse than uncertainty."¹

6. 1.11.41. *M. Kot's secret note to Molotov.*

With the object of finally persuading the Soviet Government to settle the question of releases and other matters connected with the organisation of the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R., this note aimed at making General Sikorski's announced visit to the U. S. S. R. dependent on the previous "fundamental agreement" of the Soviet Government to the Polish Government's demands.

"Appreciating the serious importance which personal contact with Premier Stalin, your Excellency and the Headquarters of the Soviet Army will have in tightening the bonds of friendship and co-operation between both Governments and in the conduct of the war against the common enemy, General Sikorski would wish for the conversations to take place in an atmosphere free from the many fundamental questions which up till now have remained unsolved and unsettled and the actual state of which would make the visit of the Prime Minister of the Polish Government and the C. in C. of the Polish Army particularly embarrassing where the Polish people in the U. S. S. R. are concerned as also are the problems the settlement of which is imposed by the force of events.

"As the aims and programme of his journey have been agreed with the Government of Great Britain and with the Governments of the other Allied States General Sikorski is of the opinion that, unless a suitable atmosphere for discussion is created, his visit at the present moment would not give results satisfactory either to the interests of the two Governments or to the common war effort of the Countries fighting against Germany. Before finally deciding the date of his arrival, General Sikorski will therefore wait for the Soviet Government's expression of fundamental agreement of the following questions of primary importance to the Polish Government and People.

"1. The acceleration of the complete fulfilment of the clauses of the Additional Protocol to the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30th, 1941 and of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. of August 12th, 1941, concerning an amnesty for "all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U. S. S. R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds, and the guarantee of suitable work or means of livelihood to Polish citizens not incorporated into the Polish Army . . .".

7. 2.11.41. *Kot-Vyshinsky conversations.*

The day after the foregoing note had been sent, the Polish Ambassador had another conversation with Vyshinsky, which was particularly dramatic and stormy where the question of releases was concerned. In this conversation a relatively longer time was devoted to the question of the missing officers. When the Ambassador recalled the promise given him during previous conversations in Moscow to the effect that the Soviet authorities "would find a way to transport people from the North even during a hard winter, by using special methods of transport", Vyshinsky referred to the changed situation from the course of military operations. The Ambassador, taking this argument into consideration, asked that he should at any rate be supplied with details as to "where those people are and the granting of facilities to establish at least telegraphic communication with them". Vyshinsky answered without hesitation "of course, I will do that," but in the next, somewhat ambiguous sentence qualified this promise. "Your Excellency can count on us for every assistance in this matter. As soon as I have found out where these people are I will inform your Excellency accurately and conscientiously."

¹ Despite Molotov's solemn promises, the Polish authorities never received any official information concerning the fate of Major Fuhrman.

When the Ambassador quoted the addresses of camps in various parts of the Soviet Union where Polish citizens were still held in captivity, Vyshinsky continued to insist that all Poles had already been released. He then raised the question of the missing officers, hitherto not referred to in the conversations. Taking advantage of the Ambassador's mistake on 14.10.41 in referring to 9,600 Polish officers who, according to Soviet data, were said to be in the U. S. S. R. (see page 163 above), Vyshinsky took the offensive. The following is a fragment of the conversation:

Vyshinsky: "The alleged number of 9,500 Polish officers in the U. S. S. R. has not been confirmed anywhere. Such a number has never appeared in the N. K. V. D. records, and the People's Commissariat for Defence also denied its accuracy. I am trying, however, to obtain the data which Mr. Ambassador required".

Ambassador: "Mr. Commissar promised to look personally into the matter of lawyers, judges, public prosecutors and police. Many generals, prominent soldiers, even many of my personal friends are missing".

Vyshinsky: "Unfortunately the fact of being public prosecutors, judges or police does not appear in the N. K. V. D. records. We simply are not in possession of these particulars."

Ambassador: "Such a long time has elapsed since the signing of the agreement, and so many of our people have not regained the freedom to which they are legally entitled. We have not even received letters or telegrams from them. We do not even know their addresses. Despite the fact that during our conversation on October 14th you promised to supply me on the following day with the information I required."

Vyshinsky: "It is true that I said that, but on October 15th Moscow was evacuated, with the result that contact between the different departments was interrupted. That is the reason for the delay in obtaining the information . . . The N. K. V. D. central office states that there never were that number of Polish officers in the U. S. S. R."

Ambassador: "I do not insist on the number 9,500, but over 4,000 officers were deported from Starobielsk and Kozielsk. Up to now an impenetrable wall stands between us and those people, separating us from them. Please help us to get over that wall. The N. K. V. D. central office or the GULAG possess the necessary details. Please enable me to send delegates, accompanied by N. K. V. D. officials, to visit the camps where these people are and bring them help and encouragement, thereby assisting them to survive the winter."

Vyshinsky: "Mr. Ambassador puts the question as if we wanted to hide some Polish citizens. Where are they?"

Ambassador: "There is Kolyma, the Bering Straits. It was stated that whole convoys of our people were sent to those regions. They are even in Franz Josef Land. I myself spoke to a lad who had returned from Novaya Zemlya."

Vyshinsky: "From your approach of the problem it would appear that it is necessary for our authorities to be controlled by delegates from the Embassy. We have records of everyone, alive or dead. I have promised the details and I will produce them. . . ."

Ambassador: "If any of the people with whom I am concerned really had been released, they would have immediately given a sign of life. It is not a question of nameless people. There are among them hundreds of distinguished men, for instance Generals Stanislaw Haller, Skierski, Skuratowicz, Lukowski. They are not children and could not be hidden. If any of them have died, please inform us. I cannot believe that they are not."

Vyshinsky: "Please let me have the names and it will be easier to find them. The name of General Haller, for instance, you have mentioned for the first time. People are not trees, they must be somewhere, but sometimes they did not say that they were Generals, perhaps they are registered under other professions. I cannot myself search for them throughout the whole Soviet Union."

Ambassador: "The data I possess come from the reports and accounts of eye-witnesses. They have seen at this or that time so many of our officers being deported in an unknown direction. If I obtained the exact data from you, I would use them. People are not like steam, they cannot evaporate. . . ."

Vyshinsky: "If I had a list of the people with whom Mr. Ambassador is particularly concerned, it would help me in my task."

Ambassador: "I have given 4 such lists but until now I have not had an answer. The most important thing for me is to be able to bring help and protection to these people. I understand that you Mr. Commissar, cannot personally occupy yourself with such questions as you are concerned with foreign not home affairs."

But we have had promises of co-operation in this matter from you as well as from the Soviet Government."

Vyshinsky: "Some people on the lists given by Mr. Ambassador have now been found. We are looking for the others. When I shall have the rest of the names I shall be able to contact the competent authorities and say to them for example—'Please report to me on the question of General Haller.' If anything wrong is revealed I shall even be able to punish who it is necessary. But you are wrong Mr. Ambassador in thinking that these things do not concern me. In the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs we have three Vice Commissars. I am the first of them and I am concerned with Polish matters."

8. 3.11.41. *Cripps-Vyshinsky conversation. Cripps' Aide-Memoire.*

Unable, despite strenuous attempts, to bring about the complete fulfilment by the Soviet authorities of the obligations contracted in the July Agreement and the release of all captive Polish citizens, the Polish authorities requested the mediation of the British authorities, whose good services played such an important role in the conclusion of that agreement. On 3.11.41 the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Sir Stafford Cripps, handed the Soviet Government an aide-memoire and had a conversation with Vyshinsky. Both the British aide-memoire and the conversation dealt with the general execution of the "amnesty" and the release of all captive Poles, particularly those fit for military service. In accordance with the Polish thesis, the aide-memoire emphasised that thousands of Polish citizens had not so far been freed but were still in prisons, concentration camps and correctional labour camps, particularly in the extreme North of the Soviet Union. The aide-memoire did not expressly refer to the question of the vanished officers. Neither were they mentioned in the conversation during which the Ambassador stated that according to British information considerable numbers of Poles were still detained. Vyshinsky answered that he was not in possession of any such information and asked for concrete data—names and whereabouts. When the Ambassador pointed out that the details had already been submitted to him by the Polish Ambassador, Vyshinsky merely stated that only a negligible number of Polish citizens were still in detention, but that possibly in the case of people very far away news of their release had not yet arrived.

9. 8.11.41. *Molotov's note to the Polish Ambassador.*

The Polish Ambassador's note to Molotov of 1.11.41 attempting to make General Sikorski's visit dependent on the release of all Polish citizens did not achieve its aim. But it is highly probable that this note and British intervention on 3.11.41 hastened the Soviet Government's official declaration of the "complete" execution of the amnesty decree concerning Poles. The Soviet Government was unfortunately supported by the official communiqués of the Polish Telegraph Agency, mentioned in the Polish note of 13.10.41, which had reported the release of Polish citizens and the consequent development of friendly Polish-Soviet relations. Those communiqués were published so to speak "on credit", as a proof of Polish good will, and were intended to help the Soviet cause in the field of world propaganda. But instead of conciliating and winning over the Soviets, they achieved the opposite results.

The above-mentioned Soviet declaration as contained in Molotov's note of 8.11.41, in answer to the Polish note of 1.11.41. In his note Molotov, coolly left the question "of fixing the definite date of Mr. Sikorski's arrival in the U. S. S. R. . . . to the decision of Mr. Sikorski himself." Stating in the name of the Soviet Government that the latter "is ready to see Mr. Sikorski in the U. S. S. R. as its guest at any time to suit his wishes", the Soviet reply nevertheless pointed out that the Soviet Government "does not see the necessity for making the fixing of a definite date for Mr. Sikorski's arrival dependent on the announcement by the Government of the U. S. S. R. of their basic agreement concerning the questions" laid out in the Polish note. Stating further that the Soviet Government "considers it necessary to base the discussions of these and other questions in the sphere of Polish-Soviet relations on the agreement concluded between the Governments of the U. S. S. R. and Poland", Molotov simultaneously made the following declaration concerning the question of releases: "In accordance with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. of August 13th, 1941, concerning the amnesty, all Polish citizens who were detained as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds have been released. To the prescribed categories of released persons and prisoners of war the Soviet authorities extended material help (free tickets for travel by rail and waterways, allowances for food during the journey etc.)."

In fact this was a completely negative answer to the Polish request for the hastening on of the full execution of the clauses concerning the release of Polish citizens. In plain language it meant: not only shall we not accelerate the release of Polish citizens still remaining in captivity, but we shall not release them at all—all those whom we intend to release have already been set free.

The note of 8.11.41 created a certain pattern which was followed repeatedly by all Soviet authorities when replying to any intervention in the question of the release of Polish citizens detained in camps and prisons. These replies were quite contrary to the real state of affairs, as it was well-known that, despite Soviet assurances, Polish citizens still remained in camps and prisons and that some of them had been released long after 8.11.41. In vain the Polish authorities stress in further notes and diplomatic conversations the fact that neither the text of the Additional Protocol nor the text of the amnesty Decree had provided for any exceptions in the release of Polish citizens; the Soviets remained deaf to all arguments and consistently referred to the note of 8.11.41.

10. 14.11.41. *M. Bogomolov's Note to Count Raczynski.*

The main contents of Molotov's note of 8.11.41 were repeated a few days later in the note of the Soviet Ambassador to the Polish Government in London, handed by the ambassador himself to the Polish Foreign Minister on 14.11.41 in answer to General Sikorski's note of 15.10.41 (see p. 164 above). This note, mentioning nothing of prisoners of war, declared that "all Polish citizens who were entitled to be released on the basis of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R., of August 12th, have been released, and the prescribed categories of those released have been afforded material help by the Soviet authorities." Further, the note merely stated that "all Polish officers on the territory of the U. S. S. R., have also been released. The supposition expressed by the Prime Minister that large numbers of Polish officers are dispersed in the Northern regions of the U. S. S. R. appears to be based on inaccurate information."

11. 12.11.41.—*Kot-Vyshinsky conversation.*

Before travelling to Moscow for conversations with Stalin and Molotov in connection with General Sikorski's visit, the Polish Ambassador had yet another conversation with Vyshinsky on 12.11.41, in the course of which Vyshinsky himself raised the question of the missing officer prisoners of war in the following way:—

Vyshinsky: "Returning to the question of the officers, concerning whom General Sikorski consulted Mr. Ambassador, has the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) a list of names in its possession?"

Ambassador: "Two lists of politicians and important people are in the possession of the N. K. I. D. One I handed to your Excellency personally, the other I had sent. As to the officers, General Anders handed a list to the N. K. V. D., but concerning only Starobielsk. The lists from Kozielsk, Ostashkov and other camps are still being drawn up by the military authorities."

Vyshinsky: "I ask you again about this matter, because I am convinced that those people have already been released. It is only a question of confirming their whereabouts. If any one of them is still not at liberty, he will, of course be freed. For me that problem does not exist."

Ambassador: "The question is very simple. The camp commands at Starobielsk, Kozielsk, Ostashkov and other camps possessed accurate lists of names of Polish servicemen detained there. It is only necessary to give instructions that those servicemen be released according to the lists."

Vyshinsky: "Certainly, if they were there."

12. 14.11.41.—*Kot-Stalin conversations.*

On 14.11.41 Ambassador Kot had a conversation with Premier Stalin, lasting for more than four hours. As this was the Polish Ambassador's first conversation with the highest Soviet authority, various subjects were raised. At the end of the discussion the Ambassador brought up the question of the lost officers from the three large camps.

The following are relevant extracts from the conversation, according to notes taken down directly after the discussion:—

Ambassador: "I have already taken up a great deal of your time, Mr. President, when you have such important matters to attend to. But there is still one more important question: may I raise it?"

Stalin: (politely): "Certainly, Mr. Ambassador."

Ambassador: "You are the author of the amnesty for Polish citizens in the U. S. S. R. You made that gesture, I would be extremely grateful to you if you would like to use your influence to have it put into full effect."

Stalin: "Are there still some Poles in captivity?"

Ambassador: "From the camp at Starobielsk, which was dissolved in the spring of 1940, we have not yet regained a single officer."

Stalin: "I will look into the matter. But after release many things may happen. What was the name of the commander of the defence of Lwów? Langer, if I am not mistaken."

Ambassador: "General Langner, Mr. President."

Stalin: "Exactly, General Langner. We released him last year. We had him brought to Moscow and talked with him. Then he escaped abroad, probably to Rumania."

(Molotov, who was present at the conversation confirms this.)

Stalin: "There are no exceptions to our amnesty, but with certain servicemen the same thing may have happened as with General Langner."

Ambassador: "We have the names and lists. For example, General Stanislaw Haller has still not be found; officers from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov, who were removed from those camps in April and May, 1940, are missing."

Stalin: "We have released everyone, even people who were sent to us by General Sikorski to blow up bridges and kill Soviet people; we have set free even those people. Actually it was not General Sikorski who sent them, but his Chief of Staff, Sosnkowski."¹

Ambassador: "So my request to you, Mr. President, is that you will give instructions, for the officers, whom we need for the organisation of the army, to be released. We possess records of when they were removed from the camps."

Stalin: "Are there any accurate lists?"

Ambassador: "All names are recorded by the Russian camp commanders who held a roll-call of all prisoners every day. In addition the N. K. V. D. carried out an investigation of every person. Not one officer of the Staff of General Anders' Army, which he commanded in Poland, has been handed over."

(Stalin, who stood up a few minutes before and was slowly pacing round the table, smoking a cigarette, but listening carefully and answering questions, walks quickly to the telephone on Molotov's desk and puts himself through to the N. K. V. D.)

Molotov: (also gets up and goes to the telephone)—"It does not connect like that" (he turns the switch and sits down again at the conference table.)

Stalin: (telephoning) "Stalin here. Have all Poles been released from prison?" (Silence for a moment while he listens to the reply.) "I have with me here the Polish Ambassador, who tells me not all." (He again listens to the reply, then puts down the receiver and returns to the conference table.) "I also would like to put a question to Mr. Ambassador. When and where does the Polish Army want to operate against the Germans. . . ."

After a few minutes discussion on the subject thus introduced by Stalin, the telephone rang, and he left the conference table and listened for a while, probably to the answer to the question previously asked concerning the release of Poles. After replacing the receiver he returned to the table without saying a word.

13. 15.11.41. *Kot-Molotov conversation and Polish Embassy's pro-memoria.*

Because of the discussion concerning the missing officers and the whole question of releases in his conversation with Stalin, the Polish Ambassador did not return to these subjects in his conversation with Molotov on the following day. Instead he handed him a pro-memoria in which he stated the conviction of the Polish Government that "all Polish citizens on U. S. S. R. territory who are fit for military service ought to join the ranks of the Polish Army to fight Hitler, but this requires:

"1. the putting into effect of a full amnesty for Polish citizens by freeing all those held in prisons and forced labour camps;

"2. the incorporation into the ranks of the Polish army of all Polish citizens fit for military service."

14. 19.11.41. *Pro-memoria of the N. K. I. D.*

In answer to point 1 of the pro-memoria of 15.11.41, the N. K. I. D. (U. S. S. R. Foreign Office) sent a pro-memoria on 19.11.41, repeating the thesis of Molotov's note of 8.11.41 concerning the "putting into effect . . . in every respect of the amnesty for Polish citizens."

¹ General Sosnkowski was a minister in General Sikorski's Government from 1939-1941, not Chief of Staff.

15. *Further efforts of the Polish Embassy.*

The Polish Embassy's untiring efforts to bring about the release of Polish citizens still held in captivity were not affected by Molotov's note of 8.11.41. The tremendous numbers of complaints and other information reaching the Embassy concerning the detention of Polish citizens formed the basis of 55 notes handed to the N. K. I. D. in the course of 9 months (October 1941–June 1942), giving the names and particulars of about 6,000 Polish citizens and the addresses of the places where they were detained. But those notes did not include the names of the missing officers, since their whereabouts were unknown.

16. *4.11.41. General Anders' letter to the N. K. V. D. and action of Polish Army Headquarters in the U. S. S. R.*

Besides the efforts of the Embassy, intervention on behalf of the missing officers was made by General Anders and Polish Army Headquarters in the U. S. S. R. The Ambassador, as a diplomatic representative, could approach the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) only, but General Anders decided that, not being restricted by diplomatic protocols, he would go directly to the N. K. V. D., who had all Polish prisoners and prisoners of war under their control and were responsible for their fate.

In a letter to the N. K. V. D. dated 4.11.41 "in connection with the release of Polish prisoners of war and Polish citizens at present in prisons and labour camps in the U. S. S. R." General Anders gave "certain data concerning the places of detention of Polish citizens together with a list of names"—stressing simultaneously that those data were an insignificant part of the information in the possession of the Polish Army Staff and promising to send the rest of the data later on. In this letter the number of missing officers was given as 8,772, with the comment that this number did not include all who were missing. At the conclusion of the letter it was stated that: "According to verified information received from London, not one of the prisoners of war for whom we are looking, and who were on U. S. S. R. territory in the years 1940–1941, are at present on Polish territory, neither have their families received any news from them. According to verified information, none of them are in prisoner of war camps in Germany".

The Polish military authorities received no reply to this letter, but during a diplomatic conversation a representative of the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) drew the Polish Ambassador's attention to the fact that it was incorrect for General Anders to approach the Soviet Civil authorities.

All this time, a special department of the Polish General Staff in the U. S. S. R. worked strenuously on the problem of the missing officers (see p. 147 above), keeping the Ambassador informed of their progress. When sending the Ambassador a copy of certain reports on this question from officers found at Griazovietz, General Anders wrote: "In the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov there were at the same time, 8,722 officers, not counting cadet officers, State administration officials, judges, public prosecutors, Frontier Guards, prison guards, police, etc. The Soviet authorities have declared several times that a considerable number of the above officers were released and sent home in the autumn of 1940. But that does not conform to the truth, since:

"1. there was not a single case of the families of the above mentioned prisoners knowing anything of their fate.

"2. searches carried out in German camps for officers gave negative results.

"3. our own Intelligence Service in Poland says that those officers are not on Polish territory.

"We already possess the most accurate information to the effect that many convoys of Polish officers were sent via Magadan to Kelyma. There are among us officers who were included in those convoys and have returned". (This last sentence was based on a misunderstanding, for the information he mentions refers to officers from Starobielsk III—(see p. 148 above).

General Anders' foregoing remarks were sent with the report of one of the officers, who concluded with the following remarks: "It is already possible to draw two conclusions from the many hypothesis and enquiries and from the fact of the hitherto complete silence on that part of more than 8,000 officers and several thousand other ranks,—all prisoners of war:—firstly,—the 'special' camp at Griazovietz was the only camp for Polish prisoners of war after June, 1940, and was obviously formed so that, should the need arise, it would be possible to prove the existence of a certain number of officers and other ranks of the Army and police, doctors, judges, and various civilians, ranging in age from youths of school age to, old men (forming more or less a cross-section of the Polish community); secondly,—the fact that up to the present moment the mass of missing prisoners have not

given a single sign of life, not one S. O. S., confirms irrefutably the conclusion that they have been systematically condemned to extermination and deported to the most distant and inaccessible parts of Russia, from where there is no means of communicating with the rest of the world, from where there is no return.

"The declaration that they were transferred to German occupied territories . . . bears absolutely no examination. It is sufficient that our relatives in Poland and abroad, with whom we were able to establish contact for the second time from October, 1940, to May, 1941, were constantly enquiring about the fate of their fathers, husbands and brothers, who were with us in the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Oshashkov until May, 1940.

"Assuming the Soviet authorities have no other intention but that of loyally carrying out the agreement concluded with the Polish Government, it must be supposed that the continued detention of Polish prisoners of war is caused only by technical and administrative difficulties. If that is so, let the Soviet authorities help us by disclosing without delay the whereabouts of former Polish prisoners of war, so that immediate steps can be taken to rescue them with the help of the Governments and peoples of Great Britain and the United States."

It can be seen from the document quoted above that the Polish military and civilian authorities were in complete agreement as to the probable fate of the missing prisoners of war. They did not believe in the assurances that the prisoners had been released in 1940; they assumed that they had been condemned to live under very hard conditions; but the thought did not enter their heads that of more than 8,000 prisoners of war not one remained alive.

CHAPTER XII. THE QUESTION OF THE MISSING OFFICERS DURING GENERAL SIKORSKI'S VISIT TO THE U. S. S. R.

The difficulties encountered in the U. S. S. R. by Polish diplomatic representatives and by the Polish military authorities in their dealings with the Soviet authorities impelled General Sikorski to attempt a radical solution of these problems by personal discussions with the highest Soviet officials.

One of the main purposes of General Sikorski's visit was to bring about the complete fulfilment of the Polish-Soviet agreement, concluded some months previously; in his first conversations with Stalin, General Sikorski therefore emphasized his opinion that "it depends on the loyal carrying out in full of the (July) agreement whether we now stand at a turning-point of history" and expressed his fear that the "slow execution of the agreement" would weaken the policy of close and friendly co-operation between the two States.

From the Polish point of view, one of the essential advantages of the July agreement was the freeing of all Polish citizens who had been taken prisoners and deported to the U. S. S. R. and the formation of a strong Polish Army to fight the Germans. When General Sikorski mentioned the "slow realisation" of the agreement he was referring to both these points and by implication to the missing officers, who were indispensable to the organisation of the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. and who, according to the belief of the Polish civil and military authorities, were still in Soviet prisons or camps.

For General Sikorski's use in his conversation with Stalin the Embassy prepared a "Note on the question of interned (?) soldiers of the Polish Army from the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov, deported to forced labour camps in the Far East and not released by 1.12.41," dated 1.12.41. As the "note" contained all the information in the possession of the Polish authorities and reflected their opinions on the whole question at that time, a certain amount of attention must be devoted to it.

In the introduction to the "Note," the "irrefutable fact" was stated that "over 95 % of all servicemen from the afore-mentioned three camps were removed and all trace of them was lost".

The "state of the three camps at the commencement of their liquidation" was then given:

STAROBIELSK: 3,920 officers (including several dozen judges and public prosecutors, 30 cadet officers. 50% regular officers, 8 Generals, 100 Colonels and Lt.-Colonels, 250 Majors, 1,000 Captains, 2,500 1st and 2nd Lieutenants, 380 Doctors, including about 20 mobilised university professors and some famous doctors). Between 5.4.40 and 12.5.40 the camp was evacuated in small groups until its final liquidation. 10 officers remained in the hospital. The formation of "Starobielsk II" began in July 1940.

KOSIELSK:—5,000, including 4,500 officers. Final liquidation 12.5.40. New camp formed under the same name.

OSTASHKOV:—about 6,000 persons, including 5,000 policemen, 1,000 military and civil frontier guards. No Officers (false information—see chapter IV above). Liquidated May, 1940.

Continuing with short description of the camps at Pavlishtchev Bor and Giazovietz, the "Note" formulated the following conclusions and postulates:

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The camp at Giazovietz was specially formed from inmates of various camps and from heterogeneous elements, possibly in an attempt to create a cross-section of the Polish community.

2. The complete isolation of the rest of the officers, numbering over 8,000, and several thousand other rank—valuable elements—would appear to testify to a desire to destroy them according to a fixed plan by sending them to places from where there is no return.

3. a. Ill-will is proved by the fact of not supplying the Embassy with lists of prisoners of war in spite of numerous demands and despite Soviet affirmations of their possession of such lists. On the contrary, they themselves demand lists from us, in order to ascertain what and how much we know about the prisoners;

b. in notes and verbal statements they obstinately repeated that "all have been freed," in spite of 10 notes handed to them by the Ambassador containing about two thousand names and in many cases exact addresses, even to the numbers of prison cells;

c. Stalin's general promise of 14.11.41 that "he will look into the matter" was the only answer to the Polish Ambassador's attempt to traverse the wall separating those many thousands of Poles from the rest of the Polish community in the U. S. S. R.

OUR POSTULATES:

The Army Staff submitted a list of officers from the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov, containing nearly 4,000 names. The extracts included in this note from the reports officers who have returned from camps in the Far East may indicate the whereabouts of our imprisoned officers. The Soviets must change their attitude regarding these prisoners by:

a. immediately releasing all our citizens from camps in the Far East, at Kolyma, in the region of the river Yenisei, at Norylsk, in Franz Josef Land and Novaya Zemlya;

b. immediately establishing radio contact with them and enabling them to return as soon as climatic conditions permit.

The additional verbal information supplied to General Sikorski by Ambassador Kot and General Anders, with whom he arrived in Moscow and who were present at his conversation with Stalin followed the same lines. During this conversation, which lasted two hours and a half, General Sikorski handed Stalin the list of missing officers which had been drawn up by the Army General Staff, containing 3,845 names.

The following account of the conversation at the Kremlin on 3.12.41 concerning the question of releases, and in particular that of the missing officers, is taken from Polish notes written directly after the meeting:

Sikorski: (after greeting "one of the real creators of modern history").—

"I shall begin by saying that I have had nothing to do with and shall never agree with the policy directed against Soviet Russia for the last twenty years. I therefore had a moral right to sign the agreement, which may be the crowning of the theories which I have held for so long . . . I do not want the slow realisation of the terms of the agreement to weaken the policy of close co-operation between our two countries. On the loyal fulfilment of the agreement depends whether we now stand at the cross-roads of history. That depends on yourself whose decisions are final in this country. Our agreement must be put into effect, so that our people will cease to be harassed and driven. I am well aware of the difficulties in which Russia finds herself . . ." (next few sentences are devoted to the necessity of a second front and the technical difficulties of its execution).

"But I must return to our affairs. I declare to you, Mr. President, that your announcement of an amnesty has not been fulfilled. A great many, and indeed most valuable, of our people are still in labour camps and prisons."

Stalin: (makes a note)

"That is impossible, for the amnesty applied to everyone and all Poles have been released" (the last words are directed at Molotov, who nods).

Anders: (at the request of General Sikorski gives details).

"That does not correspond to the real state of affairs; we have absolutely accurate data showing that first Jews were released from the camps, then Ukrain-

ians and finally the physically weaker Polish labour material. The stronger ones were detained, or only a small proportion of them having been released, I have people in the army who were freed only a few weeks ago from such camps and who affirm that in certain camps there still remain hundreds, even thousands, of our compatriots. The Government's orders are not put into effect there, because the commandants of the particular camps, having an obligation to carry out the production plan, do not want to lose their best labour, without which the execution of the plan would sometimes become impossible."

(Molotov smiles, nods his head.)

Anders: "Those people completely fail to understand the whole importance of our common cause, which is thus suffering a severe set-back."

Stalin: "Those people ought to be brought up for trial."

Anders: "That is so."

Sikorski: "It is not our business to provide the Soviet Government with exact lists of our people, but the camp commandants have complete lists. I have with me a list of about 4,000 officers, who were forcibly deported and who are at present still in prisons and labour camps; but even this list is not complete, containing only names supplied from memory. I ordered an investigation to be made to ascertain whether they are not in our country, with which we are always in contact. It has turned out that none of them are there, nor in camps for Polish prisoners of war in Germany. Those people are here; not one of them has returned."

Stalin: "That is not possible. They escaped."

Anders: "Where could they have escaped to."

Stalin: "Well, to Manchuria."

Anders: "It is not possible that they could all have escaped, especially since from the moment of their transfer from prisoner of war camps to labour camps and prisons correspondence with their families ceased entirely. I know definitely from officers who have already returned even from Kolyma that many of our officers, whose names they mentioned, are still there. I know that there were even convoys of Poles already prepared for release and departure, who at the last moment were detained. I am informed that our people are to be found even in Novaya Zemlya. A great many of the officers named on this list are personally known to me. Among them are my staff officers and commanders. Those people are perishing and dying there under the most terrible conditions."

Stalin: "They have certainly been freed, but have not yet arrived."

Sikorski: "Russia is large and the difficulties are also great. Perhaps the local authorities have not carried out their orders. Those who have been released and arrived say that the others are vegetating and working. If anyone had crossed the frontiers of Russia, he would certainly have reported to me."

Stalin: "You must know that the Soviet Government has not the least reason for detaining a single Pole. I have even released Soxnkowski's agents, who attacked us and murdered our people."

Anders: "But reports are pouring in about people who are well-known to us, giving the names of prisons and numbers of cells in which they are confined. I know the names of a great many camps, in which a tremendous number of Poles are detained and must go on working."

Molotov: "We have only detained people who committed crimes, carried out diversionary activities, set up radio stations etc, after the outbreak of war. You are surely not concerned with them . . ."

(The conversation was then turned to the living conditions of Poles in the U. S. S. R. after their release from captivity. In the course of the discussion General Sikorski said amongst other things:)

Sikorski: "It is in the interest of the common war effort to make proper use of our people. You naturally understand, Mr. President, that a specialist in building tanks who is cutting trees in the forest is not being made full use of, nor is an eminent chemist, who is doing manual labour in the fields . . ."

"Everyone should be immediately freed from the camps, leaving only those who have settled in tolerable conditions. The unco-ordinated transfer of people here and there only creates bad morale, for they find themselves in very bad conditions and so it appears to them that in making an agreement with you I have done a bad thing for them. People are dying as a result of the terrible conditions. Those corpses will be a drag on our future relations . . ."

(General Sikorski then raises the question of social welfare for Polish citizens and of sending delegates of the Embassy to the places concerned.)

Stalin: "I agree to the delegates, and in Vladivostok too."

Molotov: "I do not think it is possible that your people are still in the camps."

Anders: "Nevertheless I state most definitely that they are; I repeat that the strongest are retained there because workmen are needed. By not freeing our people they are doing a bad service to the common cause."

Stalin: "That will be arranged. Special instructions will be issued to the executive authorities, but it must be remembered that we are waging war."

General Sikorski's conversation with Stalin again confirmed the conviction of the Poles that the missing officers were alive and were detained in labour camps in the Far North. This belief was strengthened in particular by Stalin's assurance that the missing officers "have certainly been freed, but have not yet arrived", and by his promise that "special instructions will be issued to the executive authorities."

The above quoted conversations of the Polish Prime Minister at the Kremlin, and similarly all the Ambassador's previous conversations, show how far the Polish representatives were from the supposition that of several thousand officer prisoners of war not one remained alive. The thought did not even occur to them that the Soviet authorities could entirely disregard international conventions and customs accepted by the whole world in respect of prisoners of war, that they could treat them as "bourgeois prejudices". Judging their partners, in spite of everything, according to the standards of the civilised world, the Poles never gave up hope that the missing officers, though perhaps decimated by the hard conditions under which they were kept, would nevertheless be returned to the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R., which were being organised for the purpose of fighting the common foe.

CHAPTER XIII. EFFORTS OF THE MILITARY PLENIPOTENTIARY ON BEHALF OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE U. S. S. R.

The fruitless diplomatic negotiations which had been going on for several months on the subject of the missing officers and the general declarations and promises made by the Soviet authorities, but never fulfilled, gave rise to anxiety and consternation among the several hundred liberated prisoners of war and among the missing prisoners' numerous relatives and friends who had been deported to the U. S. S. R. They all knew from personal experience of the hard conditions of life in Soviet prisons and camps and were well aware that each additional day of captivity meant more deaths and more invalids. Like the Polish authorities, they were convinced that the missing officers were detained in the worst camps somewhere in the vast areas of the U. S. S. R. and severely criticized the Polish authorities for failing to intervene effectually with the Soviet authorities. The approaching winter, with its frightful Siberian frosts, caused complete despair. Many officers offered to search personally for their missing fellow-prisoners and friends. Although only recently freed from prisons and camps, they were willing to sacrifice themselves in order to give their fellow-prisoners a word of encouragement, in order to assure them that everything possible was being done to help and liberate them. They also believed that, if they could discover the whereabouts of the missing officers, the Soviet authorities would no longer be able to give evasive answers to Polish representatives and would be compelled to free the prisoners hitherto detained.

The responsible Polish authorities, realising the impossibility of "private searches" in Soviet conditions, appealed for calm and patience. But as time passed and the frosts drew nearer, it became more difficult to be patient.

The announcement of General Sikorski's visit to the U. S. S. R., and his personal intervention with Stalin himself in the case of the missing officers, gave rise to fresh hopes. The results of this intervention were received optimistically by the highest Polish authorities, but more pessimistically by public opinion.

December had now passed and none of the missing prisoners had reappeared nor shown any sign of life. Volunteers constantly joining Polish units after having been released from camps and prisons also brought no information as to the whereabouts of the missing officers.

The fact that the position remained unchanged as a result of the "special instructions", announced by Stalin at the beginning of December, caused a fresh wave of despair among the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R. And when Griazovietz' officers discovered that the "FULAG" (Camps Chief Command, see page 136) responsible for all Soviet forced labour camps, had been evacuated from Moscow to Chkalov (Orenburg), they began to urge that official intervention with the Soviet central authorities was not sufficient and that the case of the missing officers should be taken up with the authorities directly responsible for their fate.

General Anders, sharing this opinion and being to a certain extent subject to the general feeling prevalent among his officers, agreed to send as a delegate to Chkalov an officer who, having been a prisoner of war at Starobielsk and possessing many friends among the missing officers, guaranteed to do everything possible in the matter. Invested by General Anders with special plenipotentiary powers and carrying with him a letter in the latter's handwriting recalling the declarations made by Stalin in his presence concerning the detention of Polish citizens, Captain Joseph Czapski went to Chkalov at the beginning of January, 1942, as a special plenipotentiary of the Headquarters of the Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R., to investigate the question of former Polish prisoners of war.

After his arrival at Chkalov the plenipotentiary had great difficulty in finding the "GULAG", which had been evacuated from Moscow; at first he was assured that there was no institution of this kind at Chkalov, but when he mentioned the name of the Commandant of the "GULAG", General of the N. K. V. D. Nasiedkin, and showed the letter from General Anders, who had personally discussed "this very question" with Stalin a month previously, he was received on the same day by General Nasiedkin and by Bzyrov, chief of the N. K. V. D. in the province of Chkalov.

Nasiedkin received Captain Czapski in his office, on the wall of which hung an immense map of the U. S. S. R. indicating the offices of the lower "GULAG" authorities and the camps under their control. Most of these camps were concentrated on the Kolo peninsula, at Kolyma and in the neighbourhood of Verkhoyansk in Siberia. Captain Czapski was particularly interested in the last-mentioned place, as no-one had so far arrived from that area to join the Polish Armed Forces. This seemed to confirm the "optimistic" theory that the missing officers were hidden in some special camp unknown to the Polish authorities.

When Captain Czapski referred to the three camps and to Stalin's definite order concerning Polish prisoners of war, issued in the presence of General Anders, Nasiedkin declared that he knew absolutely nothing about the matter, as at the time of the evacuation of the said camps—in the spring of 1940—he was not yet head of the "GULAG". He added that in any case the "GULAG" controlled only "correctional labour camps" containing prisoners condemned by the courts, and had nothing to do with prisoner of war camps. In principle he did not exclude the possibility that Polish servicemen might be detained in "correctional labour camps" and promised to clarify the matter and supply full particulars on the following day. Commenting on the rumours that the missing officers had been sent to islands in the Arctic Ocean—Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land—General Nasiedkin assured Captain Czapski that the "GULAG" had no camps on those islands and had not sent anyone there; that if any prisoner of war camps existed there, they were not controlled by the "GULAG". The General's words were borne out by the map hanging behind him, on which no camps were marked on the above-mentioned islands. In the presence of Captain Czapski the General telephoned orders for the detailed preparation of a report for the following day concerning the prisoner of war camps at Kozielek, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, quoting from General Anders' letter the words: "on the orders of Comrade Stalin." In general the intervention seemed to be progressing satisfactorily and Captain Czapski was full of hope when he took leave of General Nasiedkin.

In the late evening of the same day Captain Czapski was received by Bzyrov. The conversation was conducted in the presence of two other N. K. V. D. officers. Treating General Anders' plenipotentiary with great courtesy and assuring him of his desire to do everything possible to assist him, Bzyrov advised him to refer the matter only to the highest central authorities, who alone could supply him with positive and concrete information. During the conversation the names of Merkulov and Fiedotov, the Deputy People's Commissars for Home Affairs, were mentioned as being the only people who could throw any light on the problem. Reports to the effect that the missing officers were on islands in the Arctic Ocean by no means surprised Bzyrov; on the contrary, he himself pointed out on the map the port of Dudinka, situated at the mouth of the river Yenisei, telling Captain Czapski that the largest convoys of workers were sent North from there. Thus without expressly confirming these reports, Bzyrov seemed to support them to be putting Captain Czapski on that tract.

During Captain Czapski's next visit to Nasiedkin, the conversation followed exactly the line taken by Bzyrov. The General received him most courteously, but there was a marked change in his manner. He informed Captain Czapski that he had communicated with Kuybyshev and could tell him nothing, as only the central authorities could elucidate this question. Czapski's attempts to dis-

cuss further the theoretical possibility of the prisoners being on the islands of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land were dismissed by General Nasiedkin with a few remarks, showing the fundamental change which had taken place in his attitude. He said that it was possible that Northern sections of the "GULAG" had sent a few groups of workers to those islands, but the several thousand people for whom the Captain was searching were certainly not there. The General agreed to accept the list of 3,845 names submitted by the plenipotentiary and to forward it to the central authorities at Kuybyshev, who alone were competent to deal with the question.

Direct approach to the "GULAG" therefore gave no results. The plenipotentiary obtained the impression that the Commandant of the "GULAG" was surprised by his first visit and was subsequently rebuked by his superiors for speaking to a foreign representative without special authorisation and without proper instructions. That would explain General Nasiedkin's changed attitude during the second conversation. This theory was fully confirmed a few days later by a representative of the N. K. V. D. attached to the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R., who remarked that journeys such as that made to Chkalov are not undertaken in Soviet Russia and requested that such a thing should not occur again. General Anders answered that he would take cognizance of the remark and the request and would send the same plenipotentiary to the central authorities in Moscow, as he desired at all costs to solve the problem of the missing officers, without whom he was unable to build up the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R.

In the middle of January 1942 the plenipotentiary went to Moscow via Kuybyshev, taking with him new and no less definite instructions and letters from General Anders and determined to approach the central N. K. V. D. authorities. At the head of the Commissariat for Home Affairs was People's Commissar Beria, with Merkulov and Fiedotov as his deputies; next in the N. K. V. D. hierarchy came Generals Raykhman and Zhukov, both of whom were taking part in the organisation of the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R. General Anders therefore knew them personally and it was to them that he sent letters through Captain Czapski.

Czapski arrived in Moscow on 29.1.42 and began making attempts to obtain a pass for the N. K. V. D. offices and to arrange audiences with Generals Raykhman and Zhukov. Both turned out to be far from easy. General Zhukov was apparently not in Moscow, and it was only after trying for several days that Czapski was received by Raykhman on 3.2.42.

Czapski had prepared a short memorandum setting out the whole question of the missing officers and an account of previous Polish intervention with the Soviet authorities. On 3.2.42 this memorandum was taken as the basis for conversation with General Raykhman. Its most essential points were as follows:

"Note on the question of missing Polish prisoners of war from the camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov"

"Prisoners of war who were at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkov from 1939 to April, 1940 (numbering over 15,000 of which 8,700 were officers) have not returned from the localities to which they were deported and their places of imprisonment are unknown to us; only 400-500 people, i. e. about 3% of the total number of prisoners of war in the camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, have been released after spending a year at Gрязovietz, near Vologda, or in other prisons."

The note then gave the exact position in the camp at Starobielsk (3,920 inmates, including Generals and Colonels in separate quarters), the camp at Kozielsk (about 5,000 prisoners, including 4,500 officers), and the camp at Ostashkov (about 6,370 people, including 380 officers) at the time of the commencement of their liquidation in April, 1940. The note stated further that after the deportation of the first group from Starobielsk on 3.4.40

"the Soviet commandant, Colonel Berezkov, and Commissar Kirshin officially assured the prisoners of war that they were to be taken to a dispersal point, from where they would be sent to their homes in Poland—whether on the German or Soviet side."

but that—

"from letters received in large quantities from Poland in the winter of 1940/41 we know for certain that no-one was sent back to Poland from Starobielsk, Kozielsk or Ostashkov at that time."

After giving a short account of the convoys sent from the three large camps to Pavlishtchev Bor and afterwards to Gрязovietz, the note stated that: "the camp at Gрязovietz was known to us as the only camp in the U. S. S. R. for prisoners of war, mostly officers of the Polish Army, from June 1940 to September, 1941.

From this camp nearly all prisoners were liberated and joined the ranks of the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. Nearly 6 months have elapsed since the announcement of an amnesty for all prisoners of war and other prisoners on 12th August, 1941. Polish officers and soldiers, who were captured when trying to cross the frontiers after September, 1939, or arrested in the places they were living at the time, having now been released are arriving singly or in groups to join the Polish Army. In spite of the amnesty, however, and despite the categorical promises given to the Polish Ambassador in November, 1941, by Stalin himself, President of the Council of People's Commissars to the effect that prisoners of war would be returned to us, in spite of the definite orders regarding the finding and release of prisoners of war from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov issued by Stalin on 4th December, 1941, in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces. General Sikorski and General Anders—except for the above-mentioned group from Giazovietz and a group of a few dozen people who were transported singly and released in September, not one prisoner has returned from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov, not one request for help has reached us from the prisoners of war who were in the above-mentioned camps . . . We are aware of the accuracy with which each prisoner was registered; we know that a dossier of each one of us, containing the record of investigations, was kept in a personal file with identification papers and photographs; we know how diligently and accurately the N. K. V. D. performed that task, so none of us prisoners of war can imagine for a second that the whereabouts of 15,000 prisoners of war, including more than 8,000 officers, could be unknown to the highest N. K. V. D. authorities. In view of the solemn promises of the President of the Council of People's Commissars, Stalin himself, and his categorical orders for the elucidation of the fate of former Polish prisoners of war, have we not the right to hope that we may at least be informed as to the whereabouts of our brothers in arms, or that if they have perished we may at least know how and where it happened."

After quoting once again the approximate numerical data, with the comment that it was impossible for the Polish authorities to state "with absolute accuracy the total number of prisoners of war who have not returned", the note put the number of officers who had not returned from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov "with relative accuracy at 8,300 and emphasised the noticeable lack of officers for the organisation of the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R. The note concluded with a paragraph on the influence of the case of the missing officers on the morale of the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R. and their relations."

Although, according to Polish information, General Raykhman took part in all the more important investigations conducted by the N. K. V. D., although the Polish section of the N. K. V. D. was part of his department, although Captain Czapski, finally entering the General's office after a wait of some fifteen minutes, met his former commandant from the Giazovietz camp, Colonel Khodas of the N. K. V. D., leaving the same office—in spite of all this General Raykhman, after gravely and attentively reading the memorandum handed to him by Czapski and underlining certain paragraphs, declared that the whole affair was entirely foreign and unknown to him, that it did not concern his department and that only out of politeness to General Anders would he try to collect all possible information, which would however take some considerable time.

To Czapski's request to be put in direct contact with a representative of the central N. K. V. D. authorities competent to deal with the case of the missing officer prisoners of war, General Raykhman replied that Merkulov was unfortunately not at present in Moscow and that he could not suggest anyone else. In the course of further conversation General Raykhman expressed the opinion that the missing officers had simply been sent to German occupied territory and that they should be searched for there as well. When Captain Czapski pointed out that careful and thorough searches in German occupied territory and in German prisoner of war camps had yielded no results, and that the missing officers' families in Poland had received no news of them since the spring of 1940, General Raykhman did not support his casually stated opinion but only repeated his promise to collect the information and communicate it to Czapski, perhaps on the following day.

Thus Captain Czapski's further attempts in Moscow produced no results. He did not succeed in reaching any official N. K. V. D. representatives or any other departments, although he made every possible effort in this direction.

General Zhukov was also absent from Moscow, with the result that Czapski was unable even to hand him General Anders' letter. Neither did he succeed in obtaining another audience with General Raykhman, who despite his promises did not produce the required information. Then Czapski's short-dated military

permit for Moscow expired and the police began to press him to leave. His attempts to prolong his permit were without result, although he referred to General Anders' definite order instructing him to await General Raykhman's promised reply. As Czapski refused to leave Moscow without the reply, after a week of waiting he was awakened after midnight on February 10th, 1942, by a telephone call from General Raykhman himself, who most politely expressed his deep regret that, as he was suddenly leaving Moscow, he would be unable to see Czapski again concerning the matter for which Czapski had come there. In any case, added the General courteously, he could not give Czapski any important information because as far as he knew all material concerning the case in question had been sent by the N. K. V. D. to Kuybyshev and was now in the hands of the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) namely of Vyshinsky and Novikov, whom he advised Czapski to approach. Czapski pointed out that the Polish Ambassador had several times approached Vyshinsky and that it was only because the N. K. I. D. had given no definite or concrete replies that General Anders had turned to General Raykhman, whose friendly attitude to the Polish Army was known, with the request for assistance and personal intervention in this matter, so vitally concerning every Polish soldier. General Raykhman replied with a few polite phrases, from which however it was perfectly obvious that he would not receive Czapski again.

After the telephone conversation with General Raykhman and the reply received from him there was no further reason for prolonging his visit to Moscow, and Captain Czapski returned to Polish Army Headquarters in the middle of February, 1942, where he reported to General Anders on the complete failure of his mission.

CHAPTER XIV. AWAITING THE RETURN OF THE MISSING PRISONERS

After General Sikorski's visit to Moscow there was a pause in the diplomatic intervention of the Polish Ambassador in the case of the missing prisoners. Captain Czapski, returning via Kuybyshev, informed the Ambassador of the failure of his mission to the central N. K. V. D. authorities and of General Raykhman's "advice" to approach Vyshinsky and Novikov for information on this question, since they possessed all the relevant information and therefore the only people able to give the Poles the explanation they were seeking. But in the light of previous experience, the Ambassador was not interested in this "advice". Soviet diplomats, having given repeated assurances that all Poles deprived of liberty in the U. S. S. R., together with all prisoners of war, had already been released, could not—or did not wish to—give the Polish authorities an explanation, which would have to stand up to detailed investigation as to why despite the alleged release, not one out of over ten thousand prisoners of war from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had so far established contact either with Polish diplomatic representatives or with the Polish military authorities in the U. S. S. R. It is true that Soviet diplomats expressed the opinion that after being released from the camps all those prisoners had illegally crossed the Soviet frontiers, but they themselves did not appear to treat this supposition seriously. They almost seemed to agree with the Polish theory that the missing prisoners, had been detained by local authorities possibly in defiance of the instructions of the central authorities, in distant labour camps either as prisoners or as "amnestied" prisoners lacking the facilities to travel to more civilised places on account of climatic conditions. But as Soviet diplomats in the course of conversations categorically denied that the missing prisoners were kept in detention with the knowledge and approval of the central authorities, renewed requests for information as to the whereabouts of the missing prisoners were pointless. Under these circumstances the Ambassador decided that there was no other alternative but to wait patiently for the summer, when transport conditions would improve, and meanwhile to carry on the search throughout the U. S. S. R.

After long and exhaustive negotiations the Soviet authorities finally agreed to the formation of 20 Delegations of the Embassy, who "in close collaboration with the Soviet authorities" were to take care of Polish citizens and compile a register of them. As Delegations were to be established in Archangel and Vladivostok, the Embassy was very hopeful that they would find some traces of the missing prisoners.

All the people who took part in these Delegations were arrested in July and August, 1942, after a few months work. They were accused by the Soviet authorities of performing intelligence work hostile to the U. S. S. R. The first Delegates to be arrested were those in Archangel and Vladivostok.

At the same time the Polish Government in London again made official representations on this question. In a note dated 28th January, 1942, London, the head of the Polish Foreign Office, Count Raczynski, pointed out to the Russian Ambassador, Bogomolov, that according to Polish information the release of Polish citizens from labour camps and "d'autres lieux de détention" in the U. S. S. R. "n'a pas été exécuté d'une façon intégrale", since "dans un nombre de cas les autorités locales administratives de L'Union n'appliquent pas, dans toute leur étendue, les dispositions du Décret soviétique en date du Août 1941."

After this general introduction, repeating the basic Polish thesis, the note laid particular stress on "le fait douloureux" that of the total number of officers and men "enrégistrés dans les camps de prisonniers de guerre de Kozielsk, Starobielsk et Ostashkov" 12 Generals, 94 Colonels, 263 Majors and about 7,800 officers of lower rank had so far not been released.

Emphasising that the searches conducted on the instructions of the Polish Government "on permis d'établir avec certitude que les militaires dont il s'agit ne se trouvent actuellement ni en Pologne occupée ni dans des camps de prisonniers de guerre en Allemagne", the note pointed out that according to fragmentary information reaching London "une partie des prisonniers se trouverait dans les conditions d'existence très dures dans les îles François-Joseph, Nouvelle Zemla et sur le territoire de la République de Iakoutsk sur les bords de la rivière Kolyma."

After thus repeating once again the Polish theory of the detention of the "missing" officers in the extreme North, the note recalled "plusieurs interventions consécutives de l'Ambassade de Pologne a Kuybyshev" and stated that another list of names of missing prisoners would be handed to the Soviet Government by the Embassy. Recalling that this same question was the subject of General Sikorski's conversation with the President of the Council of People's Commissars of the U. S. S. R. and that during that conversation General Sikorski "avait été heureux d'obtenir des assurances que les instructions nécessaires seraient."

The reply of the Soviet Ambassador accredited to the Polish Government, Bogomolov, dated 13th of March, 1942 (Ref. No. 57) confirmed completely the righteousness of the views of the Polish Embassy in the U. S. S. R., that further diplomatic moves in regard to the missing P. O. W.'s are unnecessary and would not be successful.

Referring to Molotov's note of 8.11.1941., and to the aide-memoire of the N. K. I. D. (U. S. S. R. Foreign Office) of 19.11.1941, concerning the strict execution of the "amnesty" in regard to the Polish subjects in the U. S. S. R.,—Bogomolov's reply stated that: "La vérification correspondante, faite, par les organes soviétiques compétents après l'entretien du 4 Décembre 1941 entre le Président du Conseil des Ministres de la République Polonaise GENERAL SIKORSKI et le Président de Conseil des Commissaires du Peuple de l'U. S. S. R., Y. V. STALIN, a complètement confirmé le ci-dessus indiqué . . ."

and in addition, not mentioning the names of Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov: "Etant donné que les officiers et les soldats polonais étaient mis en liberté au même titre que les autres ressortissants polonais en vertu de l'Ukase du 12 Août, 1941, tout ce qu'il a été dit ci-dessus se rapporte également aux officiers et soldats polonais."

As regards the declarations of the Polish Note that the Polish officers are still not released and that a number of such officers are on the Franz Josef and Novaya Zemlya Islands, and along the borders of the River Kolyma,—the Soviet reply declared that:—

"ces déclarations sont sans fondement et se basent, évidemment, sur l'information incertaine."

"données aux autorités soviétique compétentes et que tous les prisonniers seraient remis en liberté", the note emphasised that the "exécution efficace et rapide" of the clauses of the "Additional Protocol" concerning the release of Polish citizens "est fondée sur des motifs impérieux d'humanité et de justice", concluding with the assurance that the Polish Government attached to such execution of those clauses "un importance essentielle pour le développement favorable de nos relations mutuelles tel que le souhaitent des dirigeants de la politique des deux pays, unis dans la lutte commune contre l'envahisseur".

In the meantime the Polish Army Staff in the U. S. S. R., was carrying out the tedious task of completing and checking the lists of names of missing prisoners. At the beginning of March, 1942, the list contained 4,518 names, representing 30% of the prisoners deported from the three large camps in April and May, 1940. The Polish authorities fully realised that this task, involving so much energy and work, was entirely unnecessary, since, in view of the accuracy of the

evidence compiled by the N. K. V. D. in the camps, the Soviet authorities undoubtedly possessed complete and detailed records.¹

Nevertheless, General Anders handed that list to Stalin himself on March 18th, 1942, repeating once again the essential facts concerning the missing officers.

There were present at that conversation Stalin, with Molotov and a Soviet stenographer, and General Anders accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Colonel L. Okoliczki.

The following is the relevant part of the conversation:—

Anders: "Moreover, many of our people are in prisons and labour camps. Recently prisoners are reporting all the time. So far not one officer removed from Kozielsk, Starobielsk or Ostashkov has reappeared. You certainly must have them. We have collected additional information about them" (he hands over the lists of names which is taken by Molotov). "Where can they be? We have traces of their whereabouts on the Kolyma river."

Stalin: "I have already given orders that they are to be freed. They say they are in Franz Josef Land, but there is no one there. I do not know where they are. Why should we keep them? It may be that they were in camps in territories which have been taken by the Germans and were dispersed."

Okoliczki: "Impossible—we should have known of it."

Stalin: "We have detained only those Poles who are spying for the Germans."

(The subject of conversation then changes and a discussion follows on Polish-German relations at the time when Beck was Foreign Minister.)

Only the future was to reveal the importance of the sentence which the Soviet dictator let fall "en passant".

Among the Polish citizens deported to the U. S. S. R., were a large number of relations, friends and acquaintances of the "missing" officers. Those friends and relations, on being released from their prisons, labour camps and places of deportation, began to search for the missing prisoners, as a rule applying to the Polish military authorities and to the Embassy for information. These letters caused a great deal of trouble, for the anxious families, dissatisfied with the Polish authorities' replies, showered them with further letters demanding more detailed explanations. In consequence of the ever increasing anxiety among Polish circles with regard to the case of the "missing" prisoners the question of publishing an official communiqué in "Polska", the official journal of the Embassy, appearing in Kuybyshev, was mooted.

This communiqué, couched in exceptionally careful terms, recalled the promises given by representatives of the Soviet authorities on many occasions in answer to Polish request and, on the strength of these promises, appealed to people to wait patiently for the probably imminent return of the prisoners in summer. This communiqué was approved by the Ambassador on March 8th, 1942, but never appeared in "Polska" having failed to pass by the Soviet censorship. Soon afterwards the censorship prohibited the families of people missing all over the vast territories of the U. S. S. R. from publishing their names in "Polska".

As a result of the wide-spread conviction in Polish circles that the missing prisoners were somewhere in the extreme North, hopes of their return rose as spring approached. These hopes were sustained by rumours, that traces of the prisoners had been found in this or that region, that the Soviet authorities were preparing to receive convoys of Polish prisoners who were expected to arrive from the Far North. Such rumours noticeably gained strength in and after March, 1942; people repeating them in many cases quoted more or less official Soviet representatives as the source of their information. This later gave rise to the assumption that the rumours were deliberately spread by the Soviets, probably with the object of calming the increasing impatience of the Polish public, to prevent further diplomatic intervention and to postpone the disclosure to the world of the fact about the missing Polish prisoners of war.²

¹ It may be recalled that on November 2nd, 1941, Vyshinsky declared to the Polish Ambassador: "We have records of everyone, alive or dead, I have promised the details and I will produce them. . . ." (see p. 172 above).

² In the "History of the 6th Lwow Infantry Division" (Polish Armed Forces in the U. S. S. R.), we find on page 35 of the manuscript the following paragraph: "at the end of March 1942 a rumour suddenly began to circulate to the effect that some of them (the missing prisoners) were returning to us from the Far North. That rumour gathered strength in April, May and June. By July no-one believed that they would come. Then suddenly, at the end of July, Army Headquarters was officially informed that a group of 50 persons were coming to our Army. . . . It turned out that they did in fact come from the North, the majority from the Kolyma river, others collected from all over the Northern regions (from Archangel to the river Kolyma); there were a few officers of the reserve, but not one of them had been at Ostashkov, at Kozielsk or at Starobielsk. Thus ended the tale of the return of some of the officers from these camps. Persistently supported by someone, that tale was kept alive in our ranks for several months."

On 29.3.42 Witness 27 produced a written report of his conversation with an officer of the Red Army, who had apparently returned from an island in the Far North, where his unit was defending a base. Asked how

As a result of the wave of rumours, many members of the Embassy were of the opinion that the best thing to do was to wait patiently for the missing prisoners, who would presumably return in the near future in view of the approach of summer, and that the question should not be taken up again with the Soviet authorities. Nevertheless, on 19.5.42 the Embassy handed the N. K. I. D. (Foreign Office) a Memorandum on the questions relating to the fulfilment of the Additional Protocol to the Polish-Soviet Agreement of 30.7.41, elaborating all matters connected with the detention of Polish citizens in prisons, labour camps and forced exile and the way in which the Soviet authorities competent to release them had handled the situation. The memorandum dealt with the case of the missing officers in the following paragraph:—

"No less anxiety (than in the case of Polish scholars) is felt by the Polish Government and by the Headquarters of the Polish Forces in the process of formation in the U. S. S. R. over the fate of Polish soldiers and officers, taken prisoner by the Red Army in 1939, detained in the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk, Ostashkov and other prisoner of war camps, and subsequently, in May and June 1940, removed in groups from these camps in an unknown direction. This question was raised on several occasions in conversation with the highest representatives of the Soviet Authorities, who seeming to have solved it most loyally, clearly and definitely, in a satisfactory way for Poland, but nevertheless, in practice neither solved nor even elucidated it.

The Soviet authorities are in possession of accurate lists of their former prisoners of war, who, for reasons unknown to the Poles, have up to date been unable to rejoin their own battle standards. Nevertheless, at the request of the Soviet authorities and in order to facilitate their search for the missing Polish officers, comprehensive lists were handed over by the Polish Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Sikorski, on 3.12.41 and by the Commander of the Polish Forces in the U. S. S. R., General Anders, on 18.3.42.

The above lists were drawn up from memory with great difficulty by a few former prisoners from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, who for various reasons had managed to escape the fate of the officers deported in groups from those camps by the Soviet authorities in May and June 1940. The lists are constantly augmented on the basis of information received from the Polish Government in London and of complaints and letters from despairing families, who until about that time corresponded by letter or telegram with their relations in the afore-mentioned camps, but whose correspondence, sent to the same addresses which had been until now the correct ones was after June 1940, returned by the Soviet postal authorities bearing the stamp "retour-parti".

The above-mentioned lists are still not complete, since of over 15,000 Polish prisoners of war, including 9,000 officers, formerly in the prisoner of war camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, they contain no more than 4,000 names, including 12 Generals, 94 Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels, 263 Majors and about 3,500 junior officers. None of these commanders, so necessary to the common cause of the Allied Powers in the present bitter war, have so far returned to the Forces, nor have they given a sign of life; those of them who remain alive continue to be deprived of liberty, contrary to the obligations contracted by the Government of the U. S. S. R. in the Agreement of 30.7.41, contrary to the clauses of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. of 12.8.41,

it was possible to establish a base under such severe climatic conditions, the Soviet officer answered that there was no lack of workers, since many thousands of condemned prisoners were working on the island, among them "your" officer prisoners of war from 1939, to whom he had spoken personally. They had been transferred there from camps in the South of Russia. He remarked that if he had known that he would meet Poles he would have made a note of the prisoners' names, as he spoke to them on many occasions. Their living conditions were appalling. They worked in two shifts; they had no warm clothes or boots, and the mortality rate was very high. That officer was withdrawn from coastal defence and transferred to Chkalov.

Witness 28 was released from the hospital of the N. K. V. D. "OMLAG" (Omsk correct Labour camp) at Omsk on 6.2.42. After his arrival at a recruiting centre of the Polish Forces on 8.4.42 he stated that the head of the hospital at Aganov, when handing him his certificate of release, said "You see, at the place where you were working our people are now already building the road along which your officers will return from Franz Josef Land." Asked during interrogation for a more detailed description of the place where he was previously working Witness 28 pointed on the map to the region of the mouth of the river Ob. On his way from Omsk to the Polish Forces in the South, the same witness met a man who declared that he was a Polish policeman returning from Franz Josef Land, where the release of policemen had already begun and the release of officers would soon be started.

Witness 29, who was Polish registration officer in Pavlodar from February-March 1942, met there a woman "plenipotentiary" of the People's Commissariat of Justice, who was responsible for checking the indictments of Polish citizens detained after the "amnesty". In her work this Soviet official showed great sympathy for the Poles and during a private conversation with Witness 29 she told him that prisoners of war from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov had been sent to the Far North in normal conditions, but that now the war had so complicated the situation with regard to transport and supplies that the return of only a small proportion of them could be hoped for in the summer months of 1942.

and contrary to the statements that all Polish citizens, who were deprived of their freedom as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds, had already been released."

On 13.6.42, as a result of precise information received by the Embassy, concerning the detention by the Soviet authorities in Northern forced labour camps of two former prisoners of war, deported individually before the liquidation of the three large camps in April and May, 1940, the Embassy once again raised the question of the missing prisoners in a note to the N. K. I. D.:

"In various conversations with the highest representatives of the authorities of the U. S. S. R. the question has been raised of restoring liberty to the servicemen of the Polish Army, predominantly officers, who were in the prisoner of war camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. Those camps were liquidated in 1940, and the prisoners were removed in groups in April and May of the same year in a direction unknown to the Embassy. Since then all trace of them has been lost. Hitherto the N. K. I. D. has given the Embassy no explanation of this matter.

The Embassy has pleasure in informing the N. K. I. D. that it has obtained the following particulars concerning the case of two people, who were formerly in the prisoner of war camp at Starobielsk, were removed from there during the aforementioned period and subsequently found themselves in forced labour camps: Maximillian Hoffman in the Kargopol camp, Yerevo station, province of Archangel; Wlodzimierz Pawlukiewicz in the Ustvinsky camp in the Komi Republic.

The above facts prove the truth of statements made by Polish representatives in conversations with the highest representatives of the Soviet authorities and with representatives of the N. K. I. D., asserting that those officers of the Polish Army and police from the prisoner of war camps at Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov who were deported to forced labour camps are still in those camps, in spite of the clauses of the agreement of 30.7.41 and of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. of 12.8.41 . . .

The Polish Embassy would be very grateful to the N. K. I. D. for the earliest possibly reply both in the case of the two Polish citizens mentioned above and on the general question raised in this note of former prisoners of war from the camps of Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov—particularly in view of the fact that 10 months have already elapsed since the conclusion of the Agreement of 30.6.41 and the issuing of the Decree of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. on 12.8.41."

The Embassy received no reply to that note, but the Soviet reply to the Memorandum of 19.1.42 was received on 10.7.42 in the form of an Aide-memoire. In it the N. K. I. D. stated:

"The People's Commissariat has already on several occasions met with statements of the Polish Foreign Office and Embassy alleging that a considerable proportion of Polish prisoners of war have not yet been released. In this connection it should be recalled that the question of the full execution of the Decree of Amnesty for Polish citizens, including the question of the officers of the Polish Army, has already been explained (see M. Vyshinsky's conferences with M. Kot on 14.10.41 and 2.11.41 (pp. 163 and 169) and also the promemoria of M. Bogomolov, Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the Polish Government in London." (p. 210).

"With regard to the lists of Polish officers, referred to in point three of the Embassy's Memorandum—as the Memorandum itself stated, they were compiled on the basis of doubtful and untrustworthy sources such as the memory of a small number of prisoners; in the opinion of the People's Commissariat, it cannot therefore be concluded, on the basis of such data, that the Decree of 12.8.41 has not been applied to a considerable proportion of Polish servicemen.

"The People's Commissariat rejects as entirely without foundation the Embassy's statement that over ten thousand Polish officers are still in detention, contrary, to the Amnesty Decree."

The Aide-memoire further stated that in general all "information received by the Embassy concerning Polish citizens allegedly in detention, in no way corresponds to the truth."

The final paragraph discussed the Embassy's view that the absence of news ("sign of life") from numerous Polish citizens who were previously in Soviet prisons and camps was a proof of their continued detention. The Soviet argument on this point ran as follows:—

"It is known that many Polish citizens, who were released before the issuing of the Amnesty Decree, left the U. S. S. R. for their own country. It should also be pointed out that many of the Polish citizens who were released on the basis of the amnesty Decree escaped abroad, some of them to Germany. . . . Finally, as a result of unorganised migrations from the Northern to the Southern provinces of

the U. S. S. R. in the winter of 1941, undertaken in spite of repeated warnings by the People's Commissariat, a certain proportion of Polish citizens fell ill on the way and were left behind at various railway stations. Consequently, as the Ambassador himself stated in his note of 16.3.42, some of them died on the way. All these circumstances may well mean that a certain number of Polish citizens have not given a sign of life, but this is no foundation for the conclusions reached by the Polish Embassy in the Memorandum of 19.5.42."

The Embassy was by no means convinced by the foregoing "explanations" of the Soviet authorities, suggesting that over 10,000 "missing" prisoners of war, having been released from captivity, had either "left the U. S. S. R. for their own country," or illegally escaped from the Soviet Union, or died on the way "as a result of unorganised migrations" from the North to the South, so that not one of them had succeeded in reaching either the Embassy or the Headquarters of the Polish Forces. However, as a result of the sudden deterioration in Polish-Soviet relations at that time, the Embassy was never able to reply to the Soviet Aide-memoire of July 10th, 1942.

The case of the "missing" prisoners of war was raised for the last time—before the "Katyn revelations" on 8.7.42 when Ambassador Kot accompanied by the Polish Charge d'Affaires—Sokolnicki paid a farewell visit to Vyshinsky. It was the latter who brought up the subject:—

Vyshinsky: "As to the detention of Poles in prisons or camps and the driving of them to hard labour, I must assure you, Mr. Ambassador, that I have looked into the matter and ascertained that they really are not there. I notice a tendency to regard our replies as mere formalities, but I thought the situation was actually different. But your allegation does not correspond to reality. Except for a few groups detained as Hitlerite agents, there are none. There are no officers in the Far North, nor in the near North, or anywhere else. Perhaps they are outside the U. S. S. R., perhaps some of them have died. Not long ago, for instance, the Embassy itself in one of its notes cancelled a previous request for the release of someone, on the grounds that they had found the person in Poland. Perhaps the same thing has happened with the others. All have been freed. Some were released before our war with Germany, some afterwards."

Kot: "... as for the officers, I must say that it is just from Poland that I receive the largest number of enquiries from their families, who are extremely worried about their fate because they are not there. Not one of them is there."

Sokolnicki: "The case cited by Mr. Chairman of the discovery of one of the people proves the opposite—that we know what is happening in our country and that if such a large number of missing people were there we should certainly have heard of them. If our prisoners have been liberated, then please let me have a list of those freed and the date and place of their release. The Soviet authorities made several lists of prisoners in the camps and the production of the lists cannot present any difficulties."

Vyshinsky: "Unfortunately we have no such lists".

The attitude taken by both sides remained unaltered during this discussion, just as in the first diplomatic conversation on the question of the missing prisoners on 6.10.41 (see p. 159 above). The Soviets limited themselves to stubbornly insisting that the missing prisoners were not in Soviet camps and prisons, having been released; but they refused to give any concrete information or explanations regarding the details of their release (date, place, list of released prisoners) or, as to their subsequent fate. The Polish side rejected the easily refuted Soviet contention about the alleged fate of the missing prisoners (escape to Manchuria, dispersal, death during the "unorganised migrations from North to South, etc.) and did not believe the Soviet statements concerning their release. Nine months of diplomatic conversations had in no way solved the problem of the missing prisoners.

The question of the prisoners was raised for the last time in diplomatic correspondence—before the "Katyn revelations"—in a note of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London, dated 27.8.42, concerning the refusal of the Soviet authorities to allow further recruiting for the Polish Forces on the territory of the U. S. S. R.:

"The negative attitude of the Soviet Government towards the further development of the Polish Army is also confirmed by the fact that over 8,000 Polish officers, who were, in the spring of 1940, in the prisoner of war camps at Ostashkov, Starobielsk and Kozielsk, have still not been found, despite repeated interventions by the Polish Government and in spite of the fact that incomplete lists of those officers were handed to the President of the Council of People's Commissars by General Sikorski in December 1941 and by General Anders in March, 1942".

It is clear that in this note, too, the Polish Government in London maintained the viewpoint that the "missing" prisoners had "not been found" on the territory of the U. S. S. R. in consequence of the "negative attitude" of the Soviet authorities towards the development of the Polish Forces.

PART THREE. AFTER THE KATYN REVELATIONS.

CHAPTER XV. ON THE EVE OF THE REVELATIONS.

1. *Polish public opinion abroad just before the Katyn discoveries.*

Contrary to Polish hopes the year 1942 brought no clarification of the question of the missing Polish prisoners of war. They did not return after the resumption of communications with the Polar Regions and no news of them had been received. Nevertheless, Polish circles still hoped that they were still in the Far North and that if a conciliatory attitude were taken towards the Soviet Government they would be released. The Polish Government, therefore, tried to prevent this question gaining too much publicity, although Polish public opinion was anxiously concerned about it.

At the time the Autumn and Winter of 1942, as a result of the evacuation of the Polish Forces from the U. S. S. R. to the Middle East, the rumours that Polish prisoners of war were in the Northern regions of the Soviet Union, (see above) which had previously reached London from time to time, rapidly increased in number taking at the same time a far more detailed form. On 19.10.42 the Polish Minister of National Defence in London, General Kukiel, in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Gogomolov, raised the question of the missing prisoners. Having these rumours in mind, he announced that before long the Polish Government would perhaps be in a position to supply the Soviet authorities with certain facts which would facilitate further search. Bogomolov, who had so far given evasive and rather negative replies, merely stating that the Polish officers were not on Soviet territory, suddenly broke off the conversation, "disturbingly helpless". This behaviour on the part of the Soviet Ambassador alarmed the Polish Minister of Defence, who wrote in his notes directly after the conversation: "It seems to me, unfortunately, that the question of the 8,000 officers must be considered hopeless and that Bogomolov knows they have perished."

Besides these rumours, others began to reach London, namely of Beria's and Merkulov's remarks about the "great mistake" made to Berling and his friends in Lubianka, (see p. 123 above). This information, and the eighteen months of waiting for the return of the missing prisoners, caused growing pessimism in Polish circles which was even reflected in the Polish press.

In the weekly "Polska Walczaca"—*Zolnierz Polski na Obozysznie* ("Fighting Poland—"The Polish Soldier Abroad") No. 4 of January 30th, 1943, an article by S. W. entitled "Visit to the Soviet Union", appeared. In this article the Polish war correspondent sharing his impressions of his visit to U. S. S. R. with his readers, clearly implied that the Soviet authorities had made a "great mistake" with regard to the missing Polish prisoners, as a result of which "those people are lost for ever". The following is an extract from the article: ". . . Our elementary demands for the rescue of our people are: protection for the large number of Poles still remaining alive. The whereabouts of the 12,000—not yet recovered—prisoners of war should be disclosed to us. If we receive the reply that those people are lost for ever, then we shall demand that for that price the remaining Poles shall be properly cared for and that we shall be given every possibility of helping them. We have still hundreds of thousands of human lives to save. Rescue must be rapid—very rapid. From the mouths of several high Soviet officials the timid confession has now been uttered that a "bolshaya oshibka" ("great mistake") was made about our prisoners. A great mistake, bloody perhaps as well as great? Now we wish that this mistake will not be repeated, that the Soviet State will make amends for it as far as may be possible—by saving the rest from extermination."

So, by the early spring of 1943, Polish official circles as well as Polish public opinion, still knowing nothing definite about the fate of 12,000 prisoners of war missing in the U. S. S. R., were convinced that they had met a tragic fate.

2. *The Polish "delegation" to Katyn.*

At the beginning of April, 1943, the German Propaganda Chief for the Warsaw district quite unexpectedly invited a number of Poles to a conference without announcing the subject and without giving the persons concerned a chance for

discussion beforehand. Those invited were representatives of the town (Mr. M. Kulski, the Mayor), of the Central Welfare Council (Mr. M. Machnicki, the president), of the judiciary (Mr. K. Rudnicki), of the clergy (Prelate Trzeciak), of writers and journalists (Mr. F. Goetel, Mr. Skiwski, and Mr. Teslar), of Polish womens' organisations, artisans etc.

The meeting was addressed by a delegate of the Ministry of Propaganda from Berlin. He began by describing the problems of the war against the Soviets from the point of view of official German policy, making, however, no special political allusions to the Polish nation. He then announced that mass graves of Polish victims of the communist terror had been discovered near Smolensk, and gave a general invitation to those present to visit the spot. The main emphasis of the speech was on the "bestiality" of the Bolshevik regime and on the misfortunes of the victims of the communist terror. No details were given concerning the number of victims, their identity etc. Similar conferences were held in Cracow and possibly in Lublin. As a result, on 10.4.43 a group of Poles flew to Smolensk, comprising the following people chose by the Germans:

Mr. Edmund Seyfried—representative of the Cracow Central Welfare Council.

Dr. K. Orzechowski, from the Warsaw Town Hospital.

Dr. E. Grodzki of the Polish Welfare Committee, Warsaw.

Mr. F. Goetel—writer.

Mr. J. E. Skiwski—writer.

Mr. K. Prochownik—foreman of the "Zieleniewski" factory in Cracow.

Mr. W. Kawecki—director of the German sponsored "Pól-Press" Agency in Cracow.

Mr. K. Didur—press-photographer of the "Krakauer Zeitung".

Mr. Widera—photographer and correspondent of the German sponsored newspaper "Głos Lubelski" ("Voice of Lublin").

At Smolensk the "Polish delegation" was received with exaggerated courtesy by the German military authorities and its members were treated as "representatives of the Polish people". According to the explanations given to the "delegation" immediately after its arrival, a group of Polish labourers working, at Kozie Gory by Gniezdovo, heard from the local population in October, 1942, that there were there mass graves of Polish officers. The German authorities were said not to have been informed of this until February, 1943, when trial excavations were carried out in the woods near the N. K. V. D. Rest House. One mass grave, measuring 26 by 14 metres (31 by 16 yards) and 6 metres (18 ft) in depth was then opened and a whole cemetery was plotted out nearby. At a distance of 300 and 500 metres (330 and 550 yards) respectively from the officers grave, were graves of civilians, buried there at least ten years before.

The "delegation" then went from Smolensk to the place in question and confirmed the existence of two opened pits, from which about 250 corpses had already been exhumed, including the bodies of General Smorawinski and General Bohatyrewicz, wearing Generals' uniforms and all their insignia. The other corpses were similarly in Polish uniforms, officers boots, military belts and badges. The papers and notes found on the bodies had already been removed and put into special show-cases.

After looking closely at the grave, the representative of the Central Welfare Council, with the official permission of the Germans, made the following speech in Polish: "I invite you, gentlemen, to honour in silence, with uncovered and bowed heads, those heroes, who have given their lives that Poland may still live."

Then the "delegation" was taken to a special building, where they examined the papers found on the bodies: letters, diaries, scapulars, religious medals, identification papers, visiting cards, etc., by which 47 bodies had already been identified.

In the course of conversation with the Germans, the "delegation" asked why the Poles had only now been informed of the discovery of the mass graves, when the Germans had known of their existence for the last few months. The Germans replied that it was the fault of the military commanders, who during vital front-line operations minimised the value and importance of this frightful discovery.

Although the German authorities at first published no news about the sending of a Polish "Delegation" to Katyn, the Polish Underground Movement informed London of their departure as early as 13.4.43, and subsequently reported on the statements made by the people who had been there. These reports confirmed that the graves actually contained the bodies of Polish officers, but in considerably smaller numbers than those suggested by the Germans, who gave the number of victims as about 12,000.

Attempts made by the Germans to draw from the members of the Katyn "delegation" political pronouncements for propaganda purposes were practically

fruitless. Only Kawecki, who had for a long time been collaborating with the German press, and the Cracow workman Prochownik, wrote or spoke in such a way that their words could be used as German propaganda. The other members of the "delegation" exercised greater restraint in their descriptions.

3. Part played by the Polish Red Cross in the exhumations.

A few days after the first "delegation", representing, according to the Germans, the Polish community, a second "delegation" was sent to Katyn, this time of a more professional nature. Except for the Canon of Cracow, Father Stanislaw Jasinski (a trusted friend of Archbishop Sapieha) and a journalist, Marian Martens, this delegation consisted exclusively of representatives of the Polish Red Cross—administrative officials and doctors from Warsaw and Cracow.

From Cracow—Dr. A. Szebesta, Dr. T. Susz-Praglowski, Mr. S. Klaport.

From Warsaw—the Secretary-General of the Polish Red Cross, Mr. K. J. Skarzynski, Mr. L. Rojkiewicz, Mr. J. Wodzinowski, Dr. H. Bartoszewski, Mr. S. Kolodziejski, Mr. Z. Bohowski, Mr. R. Banach.

Some of the members of this delegation remained at Katyn in order to take part in the exhumation and identification of the bodies and to be present at the burials.

The Polish doctors and medical personnel, whose number was subsequently increased to twelve, owing to the tremendous amount of work, also served as witnesses before the world of the truth of the regularly and widely published reports of the numbers and identity of the exhumed bodies of Polish officers. The Germans, also needed people with a knowledge of Polish social relations and the Polish language to identify the bodies, read the documents found on them, etc. From the Polish point of view, the participation of Polish medical personnel in the work of exhumation had the advantage of ensuring first hand information about the documents found on the bodies. Copies of a certain number of those documents were subsequently sent by the Polish Underground Movement to the Polish Government in London, and helped to throw new light on the fate of the prisoners of war from the Kozielsk camp.

On 16.4.43 the Secretary General of the Polish Red Cross, Skarzynski, handed to the Executive Council of the Polish Red Cross a report on his visit to Katyn, in which he stated that:

A. At Katyn, near Smolensk, there were some partly excavated graves of Polish officers;

B. On the basis of post mortems on corpses already recovered, it could be stated that those officers had been murdered by shooting through the back of the head, which showed that the killing had undoubtedly been carried out in an expert manner;

C. The murder had not been connected with looting since the corpses were in uniform, wearing decorations and boots, and on some of the bodies had been found a considerable number of Polish coins and bank notes;

D. Judging by papers found on the corpses, the murders had taken place in March-April, 1940;

E. So far the identity of only a comparatively few of the murdered officers had been established (about 150).

The Germans requested that the Executive Council of the Polish Red Cross, now convinced of the authenticity of the Katyn discoveries by the report of its "delegates", should send representatives to Oflag¹ in Germany to inform the Polish officers there. To this the Executive Council sent a written reply on 19.4.43 in very restrained and almost provocative terms. Affirming that the Polish Red Cross was ready to co-operate with the German authorities within the limits laid down by international conventions, the letter requested that should the Polish Red Cross accede to this request, the part of its representatives would be purely limited to the statement of facts and that in this event the Polish Red Cross, must be allowed to resume its proper activities, which had been drastically curtailed by the occupying power. The letter demanded in particular:

a. That the activities of the Polish Red Cross be permitted by the occupying power in all territories from which the Polish army was recruited, including the Western territories officially "incorporated" into the German Reich as well as the Eastern territories not forming part of the General Government (This condition was of course not acceptable to the German authorities);

b. that prisoners of war, when released from camps, should be permitted to return to the territory of the General Government, which had been forbidden since 1941;

¹ Officers' prisoner of war camps.

c. that prisoners of war should not be removed from prisoner of war camps and handed over to the police for crimes supposed to have been committed by them before the war and that the few officers who were in concentration camps instead of prisoner of war camps should be immediately released.

Those demands were not complied with and the Polish Red Cross sent no "delegates" to the Oflag. Consequently the German authorities were obliged to organise a "delegation" to Katyn composed of Polish officers from German prisoner-of-war camps.

As far as is known, delegations were flown to Katyn from two camps, Oflag II-C (Woldenburg) and II-B (Neubrandenburg). On their return the "delegates" imparted their impressions to their fellow-prisoners, who had hitherto refused to believe the German radio reports, dismissing them as yet another lie of Goebels propaganda. The only effect of the verification of the facts by the "delegates" was general depression among the prisoners. According to a report of a Polish officer, who was at that time in Oflag II-C, the Katyn discoveries in no way served to diminish the anti-German feeling. In that there were no exceptions. But it affected the attitude of the prisoners towards Russia. From 1941 a large and ever growing percentage of officers had looked to Russia for help. After the return of the "Delegates" that percentage decreased rapidly. (Witness 31).

CHAPTER XVI. THE KATYN REVELATIONS

4. German communique on the Katyn "discoveries".

At first the Katyn "discoveries" were kept strictly secret by the German authorities, the visit of the Polish "delegation" to Katyn was therefore also not disclosed. But from 13.4.43 the Berlin radio, followed by all other German-controlled radio stations in Europe, began to announce news of the discovery near Smolensk of the mass graves of "thousands of officers of the former Polish Army, interned in the U. S. S. R. in 1939 and bestially murdered by the Bolsheviks".

The contents of the first German communique were briefly as follows:

A few days before, as a result of hints (Hinweise) given by the local population, the German military authorities had discovered the mass graves of murdered Polish officers. Those graves are situated 20 km. (12 miles) west of Smolensk, not far from the Smolensk-Vitebsk road, in a clearing in the Katyn wood on the hill of Kozia Gora ("in Wald von Katyn am Kose-Gory Hugel"), 500 metres (550 yards) from the Rest House for "senior N. K. V. D. officials".

The communique described in detail only one mass tomb measuring 28 by 16 metres (31 by 18 yards) in which in 9-12 layers, were about 4,000 bodies of murdered officers. Giving no details, it spoke of a second mass tomb with 5-6,000 bodies, and of "at least" two more mass graves. The communique estimated the number of victims at "over 10,000", representing that as the minimum and suggesting that in reality there had been a far greater number of victims of Jewish-Bolshevik bestiality".

The communique further stated, on the basis of testimony supplied by local inhabitants, that the officers arrived at the nearby station of "Gniezdovo" in the "Spring of 1940": in another place, however, it mentioned "March-May 1940". It tried to establish the date of the murders, saying that spruce trees "now three years old" ("die jetzt drei jahre alt sind") were growing on the graves. It stated that the bodies were mostly bound up and in each case there were indications that the victims were murdered by a shot in the base of the skull ("durch Genickschuss").

The communique finally stated that the bodies and the uniforms were well preserved and that identification had been facilitated by papers, documents, identification papers and decorations found on the bodies of a great many of the murdered officers. But it stressed the fact that "Schmuck und Uhren" (jewelry and watches) were not found on them.

The news given in the German communique surprised and shocked public opinion, which had hitherto heard nothing of the tragedy of the Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. Nevertheless. It was treated on closer analysis with great reservation as being Goebbel's propaganda. This was inevitable in view of its familiar crudity of tone, its frequently conflicting statements and its general vagueness and inaccuracy. The immediate question that arose in everybody's mind was why the German authorities had only found the graves in the spring of 1943, when Katyn had been in their hands since 1941—this question the communique made no attempt to answer.

The communique's obvious exaggeration of the numbers of corpses involved, also aroused distrust, which was sustained in Polish official circles by information

supplied to the Polish Government by the Polish Underground Movement, giving the number of corpses as being about 4,000.

Attempts to establish the date of the murder by giving the age of spruces planted on the graves also failed. It was pointed out in the press (see article by G. W. S. entitled "more about the Katyn graves" in the Swedish "Nu" nr 27) that spruce trees are not usually planted until they are two years old. Spruces three years old in 1943 would therefore indicate that the murder took place in April, 1942, and not in the spring of 1940. The Germans themselves found they had made a mistake, and in later reports from Katyn the information about the age of the spruce trees growing on the graves was corrected (see below).

The German information about the absence of any articles of value or watches on the bodies were also only partly true. In general, watches were not found, and this corresponded with the note in the diary found at Katyn describing the inspection carried out before leaving Gniezdovo station (see p. 65 above). But on many bodies money and articles of value were in fact found hidden in clothes or boots.

Finally, various inaccuracies aroused the suspicion of the Poles in particular. For instance, on the epaulettes of some of the uniforms were the letters "S. P." (Szkola Podchorznych—Cadet Officers' School); the communique gave the letters as "J. P.", explaining that it was the emblem "des Traditions-Regimentes Pilsudski".

5. *Journalists of neutral and German satellite countries in Katyn.*

Simultaneously with the first Polish "delegation", the German authorities arranged for accredited foreign journalists from Berlin to visit Katyn. The group consisted of:

Jaederlund—correspondent of "Stockholms Tidningen", Sweden,
 Schnetzer—correspondent of "Der Bund", Switzerland,
 Sanchez—correspondent of "Informaciones", Spain,
 Myklebust—correspondent of "The Norwegian Telegraph Agency",
 Stoffels—correspondent of "De Telegraaf", Holland,
 van der Maele—correspondent of "Nouveau Journal", Belgium,
 Szabolez—correspondent of "Esti Ujsag", Hungary,
 Mikasinowitsch—correspondent of "Nowo Vreme", Serbia,

The expedition was accompanied by a representative of the press department of the Reich Chancellery name Schippert, and by a secretary of the Foreign Office, Lassler. At Katyn itself it was conducted by Captain Freudeman.

According to explanations given to the foreign journalists by Colonel von Gersdorff at Katyn, the attention of the German authorities had been drawn to the graves by two wooden crosses erected in the Katyn wood by Polish workmen employed on building roads in the district, who had themselves been informed by the local population of the execution there of many Poles. The Polish workmen had started searching on their own and having found the corpses, which they had recognised as being the bodies of Polish officers, they had buried them again and had erected two crosses to mark the place. The German military authorities had at first ignored this information—continued Colonel von Gersdorff—but, about 10 or 14 days before, superior authorities had ordered excavations to be carried out, which had revealed the secret of the mass murder of Polish officers.

So far three pits (Gruben) had been opened measuring 28 by 16 metres (31 by 18 yards) and about 5–8 metres (15–24 feet deep, containing 9–12 layers of bodies, almost exclusively of Polish officers. Among them, the bodies of a few army chaplains and of one woman had been found.

The number of bodies in the graves had been estimated at 10–12 thousand, which figures had been arrived at by multiplying the number of layers by the number of bodies in each layer.¹

When the journalists arrived, 150–200 bodies had already been recovered from the graves; the speed of the work was said to have been impeded by the inadequacy of the professional personnel, consisting of Professor Buhtz of Breslau university (Director of the Institute of forensic medicine and criminology), assisted by only two soldiers of the Medical Corps and two Russian civilians. The primary concern of the Professor was to establish the time and causes of death and to identify the bodies.

It was confirmed that the bodies in the top layer had been killed in April, 1940, as on many of the dead people were found diaries and notes, as well as letters to and from Poland, the latest of which were dated March, 1940.

¹ According to a dispatch quoted by the "Hamburger Fremdenblatt" of 22.4.43 (No. 112) and published in the Swiss daily "Basler Togblatt", the first layer of the opened grave contained 250 bodies.

The stage of decomposition of the bodies, preserved in the sandy soil had also indicated that they had been buried for three years. The cause of death had in every case been found to be a shot right through the head from the back of the forehead or temple "in Stirn order Schläfe". The hands of a certain number of officers had been tied behind them; other bodies had had tunics thrown over their heads and had then been bound and shot. The mouths of some of the officers had been gagged, most probably to prevent them shouting when being killed. The bodies had been laid in the graves in full uniform "packed like sardines"; only caps and flasks seemed to have been scattered at random.

CHAPTER XVII. REACTION OF THE ALLIED NATIONS TO THE KATYN REVELATIONS

6. *The Katyn revelations and public opinion of Poles outside Poland.*

As was mentioned previously (see p. 225), at the beginning of 1943, Polish circles became more and more convinced that the return of the missing prisoners could not be counted on and this conviction was expressed in the article in "Polska Walczaca" quoted above. But nevertheless the German disclosures made a tremendous impression. Grief for those who were dead was mingled with fear for those still alive. Only a small percentage of Poles deported from Poland by the Soviet authorities in the years 1939-41 succeeded in leaving the U. S. S. R. with General Anders' Army. Hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens still remained there, among them many families of Polish soldiers fighting in the West and the fate of all those still in the Soviet Union appeared tragically uncertain in the light of the Katyn revelations.

These revelations gave rise to anxiety and dismay particularly in General Anders' Army, then in the Middle East. That army was composed almost exclusively of people who had passed through Soviet prisons and camps, and whose families for the most part had remained in the U. S. S. R. The mere presence in that army of several hundred officers who were formerly prisoners in the three large Soviet camps and had returned via Giazovietz, brought the tragedy of Katyn very close.

In a wireless message sent at 7 p. m. on 15.4.43 to the Polish Minister of National Defense in London.

General Anders made the following statement on his attempts to find the missing prisoners in the U. S. S. R. and on the morale of the troops under his command after the Katyn revelations:

"From the moment of my release from prison I tried to find our soldiers from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov. I always received evasive replies from the Soviet authorities. The Commander-in-Chief, during his visit to Moscow, made a personal appeal to Stalin, and received the answer that they had probably escaped. For my part, during the whole time I was in the U. S. S. R., I made prodigious efforts to discover something about their fate from the Soviet authorities and from Stalin himself. I sent people in all directions to search for them . . . In private conversations some of the high Soviet officials mentioned, declared that a "rokovaya oshibka" (fateful mistake) had been made in this matter. News reached us that some of our officers had been deliberately drowned in the Arctic Ocean. But it is quite possible that those moved from Kozielsk were murdered near Smolensk. A number of the names given by the German radio are in our card index. It is a fact that not one of the 8,300 officers from the camps at Kozielsk and Starobielsk, nor of the 4,000 N. C. Os. of the military and civil police from the Ostashkov camp, have joined the army. In spite of tremendous efforts on our side we have received absolutely no news of any of them. We have long held the deep conviction that none of them are alive but that they were deliberately murdered. Despite this, the announcement of the German discoveries made a tremendous impression and caused deep dismay. I consider it necessary for the Government to intervene in this affair with the object of obtaining official explanations from the Soviets, especially as our soldiers are convinced that the rest of our people in the U. S. S. R. will also be exterminated."

Almost simultaneously with the German disclosures a message was received from the Underground Movement in Poland concerning the Polish "delegation" which was conducted by the Germans to Smolensk (see p. 229 above). This telegram left no doubt as to the genuineness of the "discovery". As the Germans had decided to "invite" Poles to Katyn, the bodies of the officers were undoubtedly there.

The piles of bodies at Katyn were also a convincing proof of the truth of statements so often repeated by representatives of the Soviet Government that no Polish prisoners were still in detention on Soviet territory. The contents of notes

and protocols of Polish-Soviet conversations on the question of missing prisoners studied once again in the light of the Katyn revelations became painfully intelligible.

Statements and facts, hitherto variously interpreted by the Poles, only now became clear, as for instance:

a) Vyshinsky's embarrassment when the question of the "missing" prisoners was taken up with him for the first time during the conversation of 6.10.41 (see p. 159-161 above);

b) his irritation during the conversation of 14.10.41 and his promise to hand over "all the people we have" emphasising that "we cannot give those who are not with us", (see p. 163 above);

c) the fact that the categorical promises made by Vyshinsky in the conversation of 2.11.41 were not fulfilled: "We have records of everyone, alive or dead. 'I have promised the details and I will produce them.'" (See p. 172 above).

d) Stalin's silence after receiving information by telephone concerning the "missing" prisoners during the conversation of 14.11.41. (see p. 180 above);

e) his improbable and very strange statement during the conversation of 3.12.41 that thousands of the "missing" prisoners had escaped to Manchuria after being released from camps. (see p. 191);

f) the strange experiences of General Anders' plenipotentiary at Chkalov and in Moscow (see Chapter XIII);

g) Stalin's words during the conversation of 18.3.42: "I do not know where they are. Why should we keep them? It may be that they were in camps in territories which have been taken by the Germans and were dispersed." (see p. 212);

h) the statement in the Soviet aide-memoire of 10.7.42 that "many, Polish citizens, who were released before the issuing of the Amnesty Decree left the U. S. S. R. for their own country." (see p. 220);

i) Vyshinsky's exceptionally frank declaration during the conversation of 8.7.42 that "... I have looked into the matter and ascertained that they really are not there. I notice a tendency to regard our replies as mere formalities, but I thought the situation was actually different. There are no officers either in the Far North, or in the Near North, or anywhere else. Perhaps they are outside the U. S. S. R. perhaps some of them have died." (see p. 221);

7. Reaction of the Allies in the first days after the revelations.

a) *First Soviet communiqué.*—The first Soviet communiqué, which was broadcast by the Soviet Information Bureau on 15.4.43, broke a silence that had lasted for many hours during which Goebbels had been pouring forth a torrent of propaganda. This communiqué ran as follows:

"In the past two or three days Goebbels' slanderers have been spreading vile fabrications alleging that Soviet authorities effected a mass shooting of Polish officers in the spring of 1940 in the Smolensk area. In launching this monstrous invention the German-Fascist scoundrels did not hesitate at the most unscrupulous and base lies, in their attempts to cover up crimes which, as has now become evident, were perpetrated by themselves.

The German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners of war who in 1941 were engaged in construction work in areas West of Smolensk region, fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Smolensk area.

"Beyond doubt Goebbels' slanderers are now trying by lies and calumnies to cover up the bloody crimes of the Hitlerite gangsters. In their clumsily concocted fabrication about the numerous graves which the Germans allegedly discovered near Smolensk, the Hitlerite liars mention the village of Gnezdovaya. But, like the swindlers they are, they are silent about the fact that it was near the village Gnezdovaya that the archeological excavations of the historic "Gnezdovaya burial place" were made. Past-masters of such affairs, the Hitlerites stoop to the clumsiest forgeries and misrepresentation of facts in spreading slanderous fabrications about some sort of Soviet atrocities allegedly perpetrated in the spring of 1940, and in this way try to shake off their own responsibility for the brutal crimes they have committed.

"These arrant German-Fascist murderers, whose hands are stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, who methodically exterminate the population of countries they have occupied without sparing children, women

or old people, who exterminated many hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens in Poland itself, will deceive no one by their base lies and slander.

"The Hitlerite murderers will not escape a just and inevitable retribution for their bloody crimes."¹

This communiqué, though couched in strong language, had one weak point which struck everybody, even those who were entirely ignorant of the case of the "missing" prisoners of war.

If—as the Soviet communiqué stated—"the German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners of war", then their bodies must have been in the Katyn graves allegedly "discovered" by the Germans. In that case what was the point of mentioning the "archeological excavations, of the historic Gnezдовaya burial place". But, if the Katyn graves advertised by the Germans were in reality merely archeological excavations, why did the Soviet communiqué speak with such certainty of the tragic fate which befell the Polish officers at the hands of the "arrant German-Fascist murderers?"

Moreover, those people who were better informed inevitably asked themselves if the "former Polish prisoners of war, who in 1941 were engaged in construction work in areas West of Smolensk . . . fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941", why did the Soviet authorities withhold this, as far as they were concerned, quite uncompromising and very relevant information throughout the 20 months of Polish-Soviet conversations, during the whole period of which they stated, untruthfully, that those prisoners had been released? To that question also the Soviet communiqué gave no answer.

b) *The Polish press in London.*—On the same day as the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau, i. e. on 15.4.43 the German revelations were first mentioned in very restrained terms in the Polish press in Great Britain.

The following is an extract from an article in the London "Dziennik Polski" ("Polish Daily") No. 849 of 15.4.43:

"The Germans have published news of the discovery near Smolensk of the mass graves of several thousand Polish officers, allegedly murdered by the Soviet authorities in February and March, 1940.

"This terrible accusation may be yet another lie of German propaganda, aimed at impairing Polish-Soviet relations, mobilising Europe against Russia and effacing the impression made on world opinion by the disclosure of the latest German brutalities, inflicted on the population of many Russian towns."

(The article then gave a summary of the information broadcast by the German radio, after which it concluded:)

"That is the German information. It contains many incompatibilities . . . We need not add that there is not a Pole who does not pray fervently that this terrible news taken up by German propaganda will turn out—as has so often been the case in the past—to be 'lies'".

8. Referring of the Katyn affair to the International Red Cross.

a) *Communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence of 17.4.43.*—The first step taken by the Polish Government in London in connection with the Katyn revelations was the issuing of a communiqué by the Minister of National Defence, General Kukiel, and relayed in the afternoon programme of the Polish Radio in London on 17.4.43. After giving a summary of the story of the missing Polish officers in the U. S. S. R. and of the Polish Government's efforts to extract from the Soviet authorities information concerning their fate, General Kukiel's communiqué stated that—"neither the Polish Government, nor the Polish Ambassador in Kuybyshev, has ever received an answer as to the whereabouts of the missing officers and other prisoners of war moved from . . . the three camps."

The communiqué concluded with the following paragraph:

"We have become accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and we understand the purpose behind its latest revelations. In view, however, of the abundant and detailed German information concerning the discovery of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers near Smolensk, and the categorical statement that they were murdered by the Soviet authorities in the spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the mass graves discovered should be investigated and the facts alleged verified by a competent international body such as the International Red Cross.

"The Polish Government has therefore approached this institution with a view to their sending a delegation to the place where the massacre of the Polish prisoners of war is said to have taken place."

¹ "Soviet War News" No. 541 of 17.4.43.

The announcement of the Polish Government's intention to request the International Red Cross to investigate the question of the massacre of prisoners of war was completely legal and fully justified step. "The only institution entitled, under International Law, to investigate on enemy territory, is the International Red Cross. It was only natural to approach this institution. A similar investigation was requested by Great Britain in regard to Shanghai and Hong-Kong." (H. W. Henderson—"The . . . Polish Conspiracy." Glasgow 1944.

b) *Statement of the Polish Cabinet of 17.4.43.*—At a meeting of the Polish Cabinet in London on 17.4.43, after the Ministers had "acquainted themselves with all information concerning the Polish Officers whose bodies have recently been discovered near Smolensk and with the reports from Poland on this matter"¹ and after the question had been widely discussed, the following decisions were taken:—

1) to declare that "there is not one Pole who has not been deeply shocked by the news now given the widest publicity by the Germans of the discovery of the bodies of the Polish Officers missing in the U. S. S. R. in a common grave near Smolensk and of a mass execution of which they were victims;"

2) to accept the decision to approach the International Red Cross with the request that they "send a delegation to investigate the true state of affairs on the spot. It is to be desired that the findings of this protective institution, which is to be entrusted with the task of clarifying the matter and of establishing responsibility, should be issued without delay."

3) to emphasise the anti-German attitude of the Polish Government and Nation by issuing a special declaration: "At the same time, however, the Polish Government, on behalf of the Polish Nation, denies to the Germans any right to base on a crime, they ascribe to others, arguments in their own defence. The profoundly hypocritical indignation of German propaganda will not succeed in concealing from the world the many cruel and reiterated crimes still being perpetrated against the Polish people.

"The Polish Government recalls such facts as:

"the removal of Polish officers from prisoner of war camps in the Reich and subsequent shooting of them for political offences alleged to have been committed before the war;

"mass arrests of officers of the reserve subsequently deported to concentration camps to die a slow death. From Cracow and the neighbouring district alone 6,000 were deported in June, 1942;

"the compulsory enlistment in the Wehrmacht of Polish prisoners of war from territories illegally incorporated in the Reich;

"the forcible conscription of about 200,000 Poles from the same territories and the execution of the families of those who managed to escape;

"the massacre of a million and a half people by executions and in concentration camps;

"the recent imprisonment of 80,000 people of military age, officers and men and their torture and murder in the camps of Maidanek and Tremblinka."

"It is not to enable Germans to make impudent claims and pose as the defenders of Christianity and European civilisation that Poland is making immense sacrifices fighting and enduring sufferings. The blood of Polish soldiers and Polish citizens, wherever it was shed, cries of atonement before the conscience of the free peoples of the world. The Polish Government condemn all the crimes committed against Polish citizens and refuse the right of making political capital of such sacrifices to all who are themselves guilty of such crimes."

4) to approach the Soviet Government once again by handing them a special note requesting detailed information concerning the fate which befell the "missing" prisoners of war after their removal from the three large camps.

c) *Polish note of 20.4.43.*—This approach was made in a note, addressed to the Soviet Ambassador by the Polish Government in London, which was for technical reasons not handed to the Ambassador until Tuesday 20.4.43, although the decision to send it was taken on Saturday 17.4.43. In it the Polish Foreign Minister, after quoting the report of the German military authorities published by "a foreign telegraph agency", concerning the discovery of a mass grave containing the bodies of Polish officers allegedly killed in 1940, stated that:

"This report, although emanating from enemy sources, has produced profound anxiety in Polish and world public opinion. In a public statement on 17.4.43, the Polish Government categorically condemned Germany's attempt to exploit

¹ It should be emphasised that after receiving a report from their Secretary General, Mr. Skarzynski, on his visit to Katyn, the Polish Red Cross in Poland independently approached the International Red Cross with a request for intervention. (See p. 230 above).

the tragedy of Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R. for her own political ends. But more than ever the Polish Government unalterably maintains its attitude that the truth about this case so cynically exploited by Hitlerite propaganda, must be fully elucidated."

After recalling the fact that the question of the missing prisoners of war had been raised many times in conversations and correspondence with the Soviet authorities, the Polish Foreign Minister regretted

"The necessity of calling your attention, Mr. Ambassador, to the fact that the Polish Government in spite of reiterated requests has never received either a list of prisoners, or definite information as to the whereabouts of the missing officers and of other prisoners, deported from the three camps mentioned above. Official, verbal and written statements of the representatives of the U. S. S. R. have been confined to mere assurances that in accordance with a Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. dated August 12th, 1941, the Amnesty had general and universal character as it included both military and civilian prisoners, and that the Government of the U. S. S. R. had released all the Polish officers from prisoner of war camps.

"I should like to emphasize", continued the Polish note, "that the Polish Government, as can be seen from their many representations quoted above, entirely independently of recent German revelations, has never regarded the question of the missing officers as closed. If however, as shown by the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau of 15.4.43, the Government of the U. S. S. R. would seem to be in possession of more ample information on this matter than was communicated to the representatives of the Polish Government some time ago. I beg once more to request you, Mr. Ambassador, to communicate to the Polish Government detailed and precise information as to the fate of the prisoners of war and civilians previously detained in the camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkob.

"Public opinion in Poland and throughout the world has rightly been so deeply shocked that only irrefutable facts can outweigh the numerous and detailed German statements concerning the discovery of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers murdered near Smolensk in the spring of 1940."

No reply to this note was received from the Soviets.

d) *Attitude of the International Red Cross.*—At 4.30 p. m. on 17.4.43, in accordance with the instructions of the Polish Government in London, the deputy of the Polish Red Cross Delegate in Switzerland, M. Radziwill, handed a note from the Polish Government to M. Rueger, a representative of the International Red Cross, requesting the International Red Cross to investigate the massacre of Polish prisoners of war at Katyn by means of a delegation of neutral representatives. It turned out that a similar proposal had been submitted by a German representative less than an hour before.

"This was not a mere coincidence. The Polish Government in London had already decided on 15.4.43 in principle to approach the International Red Cross in connection with the Katyn revelations. This decision was reported by the "Daily Telegraph" diplomatic correspondent on 16.4.43. The Polish Government's decision was also clearly stated in the communiqué issued by the Polish Minister of National Defence, published by Reuter on the evening of 16.4.43 and broadcast by the Polish radio in London at noon of 17.4.43. Obviously the Germans, on learning from Reuter and the Polish Radio of the intention of the Polish Government, decided to take similar action, considering that inspection of the graves and bodies by a neutral international institution would in no way compromise them.

In view of the fact that similar proposals had been put forward by two parties, between which a state of war existed—as required by the rules laid down by the International Red Cross at the beginning of the second World War in respect of participation in international investigations—the International Red Cross representative told M. Radziwill that the proposals would most probably be considered by the Executive Council of the International Red Cross and announced that a meeting of a special commission of the International Red Cross would be held on 20.4.43 to appoint a neutral delegation.

This meeting, however, did not take place, and the attitude of the International Red Cross changed as a result of Russian opposition.

On 20.4.43 the International Red Cross sent a written acknowledgement of the Polish note, enclosing a short memorandum. This stated that:—

1) the Polish proposal had been studied with the greatest care and that decisions as to the further course of action to be taken would be communicated as soon as possible;

2) International Red Cross was already prepared to supply families with information concerning the identification of officers as this information became available;

3) pointing out that the spirit of the memorandum of 12.9.39 did not permit it to consider sending experts to take part in the technical procedure of identification except with the agreement of *all* interested parties.

The whole question was even more clearly set out in a letter of the President of the International Red Cross. Professor Max Huber, addressed to the Polish Foreign Minister and handed to M. Radziwill on 22.4.43.

After courteous thanks "for the new proof of esteem accorded us by the Polish Government in approaching our institution", the letter stated that the International Red Cross was prepared to appoint neutral experts on condition that all interested parties requested that this should be done and that agreement existed between the appointed Committee and the parties in respect of the "modalités" of the proposed mandate.

It was emphasised that "these conditions are in accordance with the principles governing this question enunciated in the memorandum directed to the belligerent states on 12.9.39 and published in the 'Red Cross International Review' of September, 1939, concerning the possibility of the Committee taking part in an enquiry." The letter then made "a request to the Polish Government to inform us what steps will be taken to obtain the agreement of the Soviet Government or to make suggestions in this respect." In conclusion the letter stated that "in anticipation of the possibility that agreement is reached between the interested parties, we are already endeavouring to find neutral persons who possess the necessary qualifications."

According to private information supplied to M. Radziwill, the International Red Cross intended to send to Katyn an investigatory commission composed of Swedish, Portuguese and Swiss experts, under the leadership of a Swiss. But, as was clear from the foregoing letter, everything depended on the agreement of Russia. The International Red Cross therefore suggested that the Polish Government should approach the U. S. S. R. either directly or through the medium of the Anglo-Saxon Allies.

A similar letter dated 22.4.43, was sent by the International Red Cross to the German authorities, suggesting that they endeavour to obtain the consent of the Soviet Government to an investigatory commission through the medium of the "puissance protectrice".

In view of the wide interest aroused throughout the world by the Katyn affair, the International Red Cross published the following communiqué on 23.4.43:

"The German Red Cross and the Polish Government in London have approached the International Red Cross with a request for its participation in the identification of bodies which, according to German reports, have been discovered near Smolensk.

"In both cases the International Red Cross replied that in principle it is prepared to afford assistance by selecting neutral experts, on condition that similar appeals are received from all parties interested in this question. This is in accordance with the memorandum sent by the International Red Cross in December, 1939, to all belligerent nations, defining the principles on the basis of which the International Red Cross may participate in this kind of investigation."

CHAPTER XVIII. U. S. S. R.'S REACTION TO APPEALS TO THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

3. U. S. S. R.'s reaction to the communiqué of the Polish Minister of National Defence.

The first communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau on 15.4.43 (see p. 247) was followed by a second published on 17.4.43.

This communiqué transmitted by Reuter stated that the German accusations were wholly improbable and that the hand of the Gestapo was clearly to be seen in them. The bodies of the murdered people would have had to have been completely mummified in order to be recognizable after several years. Similarly the documents found of the bodies would have had to have been chemically treated to be decipherable. But the Germans had mentioned nothing of that. The whole affair was explained, according to the Soviet communiqué, by the fact that when the Soviet Army withdrew from the region of Smolensk, a certain number of former Polish prisoners had fallen into the hands of the Hitlerites. Some of them had been murdered immediately, the remainder had been kept alive for a special purpose. The latter had been murdered by the Gestapo quite recently, which explained why their bodies had not decomposed. The personal documents allegedly found on the bodies had been taken, according to the Soviet communiqué, from the Gestapo archives, and that explained why there were so easy to read.

The Hitlerites, concluded the Soviet communiqué, who had destroyed the whole of the Polish intelligentsia, were now trying to play the role of defenders of Poland, and by hurling calumnies at the Soviet Union they intended to make the world forget the crimes perpetrated by themselves.

The press devoted relatively little attention to this Soviet communiqué, it was completely eclipsed by a sensational editorial published in "Pravda" on 19.4.43 entitled "Hitler's Polish Collaborators."

The following are extracts from that article, which was the Soviet reply to the communiqué issued by the Polish Minister of National Defence on 17.4.43:

"Slander spreads rapidly. Before the ink has dried on the pens of the German-Fascist scribblers, the vile inventions of Goebbels and Co. springing from the alleged mass shooting of Polish officers by the Soviet authorities in 1940, are taken up not only by faithful Hitlerite lackeys, but, Oh wonder, by General Sikorski's ministerial circles."

"One would think that the Polish Ministry was well aware of the vile reputation enjoyed by German propaganda, which long ago beat all records in prodigious monstrous, provocative lies.

"Nevertheless, contrary to common sense, the Polish Ministry has found nothing better to do than to support in its communiqué the vile provocation of the Hitlerites, and approach the International Red Cross with a request for an 'investigation' of something which never happened, or, strictly speaking, of that which has been done by the Berlin torture specialists and thereafter villainously attributed to the Soviet authorities. The Polish leaders have in an inexcusable manner fallen prey to the wily provocations of Goebbels and thus in reality are supporting the villainous tricks and slanderous inventions of the executioners of the Polish nation.

"After this it is hardly surprising that Hitler also has approached the International Red Cross with a proposal for an 'investigation' of the scenery prepared by the hands of his masters of the science of crime. Thus the ways of the German provocators and of their Polish assistants met."

The article then denied accusations made by the Germans in 1941 that during the Soviet Army's withdrawal from Lwow mass butcheries had been carried out there, stating that Soviet witnesses had testified that the Lwow murders had not been committed by the withdrawing Soviet army, but by the advancing Germans. "Pravda" continued:

"The same base Hitlerite provocation has taken place this time too. As had now become perfectly clear the Germans seized the former Polish prisoners of war who were in 1941 engaged in construction work in the regions West of Smolensk and who, together with many Soviet inhabitants of the province of Smolensk, fell into the hands of the German-Fascist executioners in the summer of 1941 after the withdrawal of the Soviet armies from the region of Smolensk.

"The Germans bestially killed the former Polish prisoners of war and many Soviet people. How they wish to obliterate all traces of their crimes and, in the hope that they will find credulous people to believe them, are attempting to cover up their monstrous crimes with a new series of vile insinuations. The Hitlerite sadists, with astonishing knowledge of the affair, describe the details and particulars of the murder of Polish officers. But the more of these 'details' they give—even to such particulars as visiting cards and identification papers, which they themselves had the foresight to put into the pockets of the bestially tortured officers—the more obvious does it become that the Hitlerite executioners, who graduated in Himmler's school of torture, are describing their own rich experiences . . ."

The article conjectured that the aim of "the base devices of the Hitlerite torturers" was to "obliterate the traces of their own monstrous crimes, to wipe out their own bloody murders, for which they will have to take a heavy responsibility. Their bestial fear of the inevitable atonement for their bloody crimes causes these licensed torturers of the Slavonic nations, and of other freedom loving nations, to discover new villainous methods of carrying out further provocations in their search for salvation. Feeling the tremendous anger of the whole of progressive mankind against the massacre of peaceful and defenseless populations, particularly of the Jews, the Hitlerites try with all their strength to incite credulous and naive people against the Jews."

"Pravda" went on to state that the "Jewish commissars" named by the Germans as the executioners of Katyn were never in the Smolensk section of the G. P. U. "they were not, nor never had been in the N. K. V. D. organization" and that "it is not difficult for experienced masters of provocation to invent a few names of nonexistent people.

"In the light of these facts", continued "Pravda", "the Polish Minister of National Defense's request to the International Red Cross cannot be considered as

anything but direct and obvious help to the Hitlerite provocators in their task of fabricating base falsehoods. In all healthy minded people, particularly in those who themselves experience the nightmare of the Hitlerite tyranny, falsehood of the kind can arouse only disgust."

From this last assumption "Pravda" concluded, in the name of the Polish nation that: "it (the Polish nation) rejects the Hitlerite slander against its brother, the Soviet nation, which has shown to the world a miracle of heroism, courage and nobility. Those Poles who willingly take up and support Hitlerite falsehood, and are ready to co-operate with the Hitlerite executioners of the Polish nation, will go down to history as the helpmates of Cannibal Hitler. The Polish nation turns away from them, as from people who are giving aid to the sworn enemy of Poland, Hitler."

This article in "Pravda", by its form no less than by its contents, caused a great international sensation which was reflected in the press of the whole world. The American "New York Times" published a cable from Moscow under the headlines: "'Pravda' says Poles have been cheated by Hitlerites—Sikorski regime accused of helping Hitlerite torturers by repeating accusations about massacre." The New York Times foresaw from the article in "Pravda" that "this affair has led us to a critical turn in Polish Soviet relations, whose course has been so stormy since the beginning of the war."

On the following day, 20.4.43, the official "Izvestia" reprinted the "Pravda" article, as an editorial, while "TASS", the official Soviet news agency, published the following communique:

"On the basis of information received, TASS is able to state that the leading article 'Hitlers Polish Collaborators', which appeared in 'Pravda' on 19.4.43 as a result of the well known provocative communique of the Polish Minister of National Defence, completely corresponds with the attitude taken in Soviet leading circles towards this affair. The declaration issued by M. Sikorski's Government on the same subject on 18th April does not improve the matter, but makes it worse since it is in line with the aforementioned provocative communique of the Polish Ministry of National Defence and thereby helps the German occupiers to cover up their crimes against the Russian and Polish nations. The fact that the anti-Soviet campaign started simultaneously in the German and Polish press and follows one and the same plan, that astonishing fact permits the assumption that this anti-Soviet campaign is carried out on the basis of a previous understanding between the German occupiers and the pro-Hitler elements in M. Sikorski's ministerial circles. The declaration of the Polish Government proves that the pro-Hitler elements have a strong influence in the Polish Government and that they are taking fresh steps to bring about a deterioration in the relations between Poland and the U. S. S. R."

When the "Katyn revelations" were made public Anglo-Saxon opinion completely ignorant of the affair of the "missing" Polish prisoners of war, was inclined to consider them as one more piece of lying Goebbels' propaganda.

That 10,000 defenceless prisoners of war should have been murdered by a non-belligerent state seemed too horrible to fall within the bounds of possibility.

The thesis enunciated in "Pravda's" sensational article was no less improbable. Poland, known throughout the world as a "country without a 'Quisling'", was accused of having a Government dominated by pro-Hitler elements which . . . were in direct contact with Goebbels, coming to agreement with him as to details "or receiving directions from him" for a joint campaign of propaganda directed against one of the big Allies.

This thesis was nevertheless fully accepted by the Soviet Government, which treated it not only as an argument of propaganda for the masses, but as a proved fact on which to base drastic action.

10. U. S. S. R. severs diplomatic relations with Polish Government.

In the note of 17.9.39 the Soviet Government put forward the thesis that Poland had ceased to exist as an independent, sovereign state to which the law of nations applied, and that in consequence all treaties concluded between the U. S. S. R. and Poland were no longer binding.

That thesis was subsequently repeated in the German-Soviet Agreement signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov in Moscow on 28.9.39, defining the boundary between the "spheres of interest" of the two aggressor states on Polish territory. From this time this thesis had never been completely abandoned by the Soviet Union.

Even after Hitler's attack on Russia, at the time of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations in London, the representative of the Soviet Government proposed to form

a Polish "National Committee" in Moscow (see p. 139), hoping thereby to avoid giving formal recognition to the Polish Government.

The military situation of the Soviet Union in the first stage of the war compelled the Soviet Government to abandon, under strong diplomatic pressure from the West, this idea of a "Committee", and to conclude a formal agreement with the Polish Government. But, as soon as the situation changed, the Soviet Government reverted more and more openly to its former attitude and to the plans put forward in London in June, 1941, for the formation of a "Committee." The stages of this development, which began with the first Soviet military successes were as follows:—

A) In December, 1941, when the German offensive was held, the Soviet Government at the time of General Sikorski's visit to the U. S. S. R., in an official note, refused from then on to recognise as Polish citizens persons belonging to the "Polish national minorities"—Jews, White Russians, Ukrainians etc.—and simultaneously attempted to organise in Saratoff a group of Polish communists to form the nucleus of a Red Polish Committee.

B) In March, 1942, the Soviet Government curtailed the numbers of the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. on the pretext that the Western Allies had not supplied the agreed quantities of foodstuffs. This necessitated a partial evacuation of the Polish Army from the U. S. S. R.

C) In May, 1942, "New Horizon", a periodical published in Polish, which had been suspended since the July 1941 Pact, was revived in Kuybyshev. This publication, as the organ of the Union of Soviet Writers of the U. S. S. R., had earlier on appealed to "the people of the valorous Polish nation" to take their place in the ranks of the Red Army and to join "the fight for the integrity of our (Soviet) frontiers" (No. 5/6, 1941, p. 6-7).

D) In May, 1942, the Soviet Government, in a note dated 14.5.42 prohibited further recruiting for the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R.

E) At the end of June, 1942, the Soviet Government approached the British Embassy, with a request for the complete evacuation of the Polish Army from the U. S. S. R. After this had been carried out, unscrupulous propaganda was spread to the effect that the Polish Army in the U. S. S. R. did not wish to fight the Germans.

F) From July, 1942, members of the Polish Embassy were being arrested under the charge of "espionage activities hostile to the U. S. S. R." and the whole organisation for bringing relief to the Polish community in the U. S. S. R. was liquidated. Simultaneously all stores of food and equipment as well as all welfare institutions were placed under Soviet administration.

After the turn of the tide at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942/3 the tempo of Soviet activities leading to a resumption of the policy of the formation of a Polish "Red Committee" increased.

G) In January, 1943, the Soviet Government unilaterally proclaimed as Soviet citizens all persons who on 1-2.11.39 were on territories occupied by the Red Army, which meant in practice nearly 100% of the total Polish population deported to the U. S. S. R.

H) In February, 1943, the formation of voluntary Polish detachments within the Red Army was mooted.

I) In March, 1943, the "Union of Polish Patriots" was formed in Moscow under the leadership of Wanda Wasilewska, a Soviet citizen, member of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. and wife of a Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The publication of the periodical "Free Poland" was also commenced. The Union of Polish Patriots was obviously the nucleus of the "Red National Committee" and the basis for the future organisation of the so-called "Lublin Committee".

J) In March, 1943, Commissar Molotov openly warned representatives of the Polish Government in the U. S. S. R. that "no good will come" of their insistence on the existence of the pre-war Polish state with frontiers as defined by the Treaty of Riga.

Consequently, 20 months after the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Agreement in 1941 nothing of it remained except the formal existence of diplomatic relations. The decision to sever these relations, announced in Stalin's letter of 23rd April, 1942, was therefore the direct outcome of the previous course of events. The Katyn affair, although embarrassing for the Soviets, made a convenient pretext for taking this step.

On the night of Easter Sunday, 25th April to Monday, 26th April, 1943, at 12.15 a. m., 24 hours after General Sikorski had refused to announce that the whole Katyn affair was only a trick of German propaganda, the Polish Amba-

sador in the U. S. S. R. was summoned to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where Molotov attempted to hand him a note, which he had previously read aloud. The contents of the note were as follows:

Moscow, April 26. 1943.

‘Mr. Ambassador,

“On behalf of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I have the honour to notify the Polish Government of the following:

“The Soviet Government consider the recent behaviour of the Polish Government with regard to the U. S. S. R. as entirely abnormal, and violating all regulations and standards of relations between two Allied States. The slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union launched by the German Fascists in connection with the murder of the Polish officers, which they themselves committed in the Smolensk area on territory occupied by German troops, was at once taken up by the Polish Government and is being fanned in every way by the Polish official press.

“Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the U. S. S. R., the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject.

“Having committed a monstrous crime against the Polish officers, the Hitlerite authorities are now staging a farcical investigation, and for this they have made use of certain Polish pro-Fascist elements which they themselves selected in occupied Poland where everything is under Hitler’s heel, and where no honest Pole can openly have his say.

“For the ‘investigation’, both the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government invited the International Red Cross, which is compelled, in conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation farce staged by Hitler. Clearly such an ‘investigation’, conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty.

“The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultancously in the German and Polish press, and was conducted along the same lines, leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord in carrying out this hostile campaign between the enemy of the Allies—Hitler—and the Polish Government.

“While the peoples of the Soviet Union, bleeding profusely in a hard struggle against Hitlerite Germany, are straining every effort for the defeat of the common enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples, and of all freedom-loving democratic countries, the Polish Government, to please Hitler’s tyranny, has dealt a treacherous blow to the Soviet Union.

“The Soviet Government is aware that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union is being undertaken by the Polish Government in order to exert pressure upon the Soviet Government, by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania.

“All these circumstances compel the Soviet Government to recognise that the present Government of Poland, having slid on the path of accord with Hitler’s Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the U. S. S. R., and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union.

“On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.

Molotov.”

The Ambassador declined to accept the note and “most emphatically refused to be a party to the motives and conditions set forth” in it, remarking that it attributed to the Polish Government “in an inadmissible form . . . conduct “and intentions entirely inconsistent with the facts.”

Apart from evading the basic question of the murder of Polish officers, the Soviet note contained the following untrue statements:—

a) That the “Katyn campaign” was “at once taken up by the Polish Government and is being fanned in every way by the Polish official press.”

The first mention of the Katyn discovery appeared in the Polish Government press in London on the same day as the first Soviet communique, namely on 15.4.43, and was couched in very cautious and moderate terms. (see above p. 249).

b) That the Polish Government “did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject”.

PART TWO of these notes is devoted to the history of the Polish Government’s

attempts over a period of nearly two years to extract replies and explanations from the Soviet Government concerning the missing prisoners. In addition, the Polish note of 20.4.43, after the "Katyn revelations", again addressed the same question to the Soviet Government and again asked for an explanation.

c) That in staging "the farcical investigation" the Hitlerite authorities made use of Polish "pro-Fascist elements" selected by themselves. It has already been mentioned that the representatives of the Central Welfare Council, the members of the Town Council nominated by the occupation authorities and the Polish Red Cross exercised very great restraint, confining themselves almost exclusively to informing the Polish community of the facts as seen by them (see p. 226-229).

d) That the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government involved in the "investigation" (the word being put in inverted commas in the note) the International Red Cross "which is compelled, in conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation farce staged by Hitler". The International Red Cross was not involved in the "investigation" and took no part in the Katyn affair; its representatives were not compelled to go to territories under the rule of a terroristic regime.

e) That the response of the German and Polish press commenced simultaneously and was conducted along the same lines. The conclusion that "it leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord . . . between the enemy of the Allies—Hitler—and the Polish Government" was therefore a calumny.

f) That the Polish Government's persistent efforts over a period of nearly two years to elucidate the fate of thousands of Polish officers "missing" in the U. S. S. R. constituted a "treacherous blow to the Soviet Union", executed in order to please Hitler's tyranny. This completely unfounded Soviet statement was not only untrue but also slanderous.

g) That this campaign, allegedly hostile to the U. S. S. R. was undertaken by the Polish Government "in order to exert pressure upon the Soviet Government, by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania". The Polish Government had never conceived the idea of and had absolutely no desire for the smallest territorial concessions from its Eastern and Northern neighbours whereas the Soviet Government had exerted very heavy pressure on the Polish Government in an effort to extort the cessation to the Soviets of the Eastern half of the Polish state.

h) Finally, that the Polish Government "having slid along the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the U. S. S. R. and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union." The Polish Government's main desire was to maintain normal allied relations with the U. S. S. R. and this has been made clear in many official statements.

All these false statements were repeated shortly afterwards in an article entitled "The U. S. S. R.'s Answer to Hitler's Polish Assistants", which appeared in "Izvestia" on 27.4.43. The following are extracts from that article:

"For two weeks the German-Fascist press and radio have been raging, disseminating monstrous calumnies against the Soviet Union, striving by all means and methods to cover up the new crime committed by the Hitlerite against the Polish nation, attempting to shift from themselves the responsibility for their crimes. For two weeks the Hitlerite slanderers have exhausted themselves in raging incitement against the Soviet Union, describing with methodical sadism the 'Bolshevik bestiality' devised by themselves. They have not recoiled before direct manipulation of facts, before obvious falsity and knavery, relying on overcredulous people and on those who are easily misguided by the vast accumulation of cheap lies, calumnies and provocations disseminated by the Hitlerites."

After this characterisation of the "Katyn campaign" and after recalling the German brutalities and murders in Poland, "Izvestia" insinuated that the Polish Government had immediately taken up the Hitlerite slander and had instructed its official press to support the campaign of provocation. The Polish Government, continued the article: "declaring hypocritically in its official communiqué that it is accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and understands the purpose of its 'revelations', in reality follows the line of supporting those 'revelations' and, as soon as the German-Fascist liars have vomited their shameful lies, the Polish Government joins the slanderous Fascist campaign. The Polish Government . . . has acted behind the back of the Soviet Government. The Polish Government pushed the Ministry of National Defense on to the scene and on 16.4.43, that is on the third day after the Germans first published their inventions about Polish officers, that Ministry published a communiqué conforming in

the spirit of the information of the Hitlerites. On April 17th the Polish Government made a similar declaration, thus setting in full motion the slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union".

After recalling that the Hitlerite authorities had involved "Polish pro-Fascists from occupied Poland" in the "farcical investigation, unexampled in impudence and falsity", and that they had attempted to give the "investigation" a more serious appearance by disguising it under the authority of the International Red Cross, "Izvestia" stated that:

"by its concord with the Hitlerite Government in these matters, the Polish Government has proved the existence of a certain understanding between the Polish and German Fascists Governments."

After describing the situation in Poland under the rule of the German occupiers, "Izvestia" stated further that: "similarly perfidious behaviour of the Polish Government can be explained. For a long time the official Polish press has been openly stating the claims of Polish imperialist circles to the territories of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania. The Polish Government's aggressive lust has lead it to agreement with the Hitlerite Government, which is tearing apart the Polish nation.

"Here are the roots of the hostile and slanderous campaign against the Soviet Union which was launched simultaneously by the Polish Government and Hitler.

"The Polish Government took the treacherous path of understanding with Hitler—foe of the Polish and Russian peoples, foe of all peace loving peoples".

"Izvestia" went on to express no doubt that the "Polish people fighting for their freedom and independence will condemn the faith-breaking behaviour of the Sikorski Government which has struck a treacherous blow to the common cause of the fight against Hitler, the executioner of peoples".

In conclusion "Izvestia" seemed to underline rather significantly the strength of the military power of the Soviet Union which, it maintained, could be sure not only of the "rightness of its cause but also of the strength of its forces". It openly stated that the decision of the Soviet Government signified that the "interests of the Soviet Union and the immunity of the holy rights of its peoples are under powerful and vigilant protection".

CHAPTER XIX. AFTER THE SEVERING OF POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS.

11. *Effects and purpose of the severing of Polish-Soviet relations.*

Moscow radio's communiqué announcing the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Poland by the Soviets surprised public opinion in the West, where the possibility of such drastic action had not been envisaged.

This action on the part of the Soviet Government shifted the Katyn affair from a moral to a political plane. Up to this time the history of the many thousand missing officer P. O. W.'s and the finding of their corpses in the Katyn graves had been one of human tragedy. From this moment it became, an incident in the development of inter-allied political relations.

The breach which resulted from the Soviet reaction to the Katyn revelations was the aspect of the affair seized upon by the Anglo-Saxon press which was chiefly concerned lest this breach should grow and lead to a definite split in the Allied ranks.

The fear that the U. S. S. R. would conclude a separate peace with Germany, never wholly extinguished in the West, was naturally revived.¹ Consequently the Anglo-Saxon press made great efforts to calm the atmosphere, appealing to both sides, not to fall into a "Goebbels trap", and urging upon them restraint and mutual concessions. As to the merits of the Katyn affair itself, most of the press refrained from passing judgment with the exception of a few of the more pro-Soviet papers, lead by the "Daily Worker", which accepted the Soviet thesis without reserve and announced the severing of Polish-Soviet relations as having been the "result of catching the Polish Government in London red-handed in conspiracy with the Nazis".

Therefore, while the British press in general took an optimistic line, presuming the possibility of the renewal in the near future of the temporarily "severed" Polish-Soviet relations, the "Daily Worker" (notably in the issue of 28.4.43) derided this attitude as naive and expressed its assurance that there could not be any resumption of diplomatic relations with the "guilty Polish Government".

The real political purpose of the Soviet accusation that the Polish Government was "collaborating with Hitler" was two-fold:

¹As one of many examples, Raymond Clapper in a dispatch in "New York World's Telegram" expressed the fear that Russia was making preparations for a separate peace.

1. if this could be proved the Polish Government's appeal to the Int. Red Cross would no longer give rise to the widely expressed doubts as to whether the German accusations were in fact of a wholly "slanderous and fantastic character", as the Soviets insisted;

2. this would completely disqualify the "London Government" from being legally entitled to champion the "Polish cause", thus leaving the field clear for the long planned, Soviet sponsored "National Committee" which was after its formation to represent a "New"—pro-Soviet Poland.

This unproveable and fantastic accusation was therefore lodged by the Soviet Government in deadly earnest, notwithstanding the firmly protesting attitude of the Anglo-Saxon press.¹

The thesis that the Polish Government was guilty of collaboration with Hitler was most fully elaborated by papers published in Polish in the Soviet Union under the aegis of the "Union of Polish Patriots", which had been formed in March, 1943, and was to constitute the nucleus of the future "Polish Committee of National Liberation" finally created in July, 1944. Their object was, of course, to compromise the Polish Government in the eyes of several hundred thousand deported Polish citizens in the Soviet Union from among whom as was announced in an official Soviet communiqué at the beginning of May, 1943, a "Tadeusz Kosciuszko Polish Division" would be formed "for the purpose of fighting side by side with the Red Army against the German invaders."

12. *Official attempts to solve the Polish-Soviet conflict.*

In British and American Government circles the decision of the Soviet Government to break off relations with the Polish Government caused great concern and considerable efforts were made to solve the conflict.

On April 27th and 28th, 1943, General Sikorski had conferences with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden as well as with the United States Ambassador, Mr. Drexel Biddle.

On April 27th a meeting of the Polish Cabinet was also held, at which the President of the Polish Republic was present. At this meeting the text of declaration which was published on April 28th was decided upon. This declaration firmly declared that a "policy aiming at a mutual friendly understanding between Poland and Soviet Russia on the basis of the integrity and full sovereignty of the Republic of Poland was and continues to be fully supported by the Polish Nation . . . Having settled their relations with Soviet Russia by the agreement of July 30th, 1941 and by the Declaration of December 4th, 1941, the Polish Government have strictly discharged their obligations . . . In the light of facts known throughout the world, the Polish Nation and the Polish Government have no need to defend themselves from any charge of contact or understanding with Hitler. In a public statement of April 17th, 1943, the Polish Government categorically denied to Germany the right to abuse the tragedy of Polish officers for her own perfidious aims. They unhesitatingly denounced the effort of Nazi propaganda to create distrust between the Allies . . ."

As it was supposed that the appeal to the Int. Red Cross was the chief cause of the Soviets uncompromising attitude, the Polish authorities willing to make every reasonable concession to the powerful Ally in the interest of Allied unity as a whole issued a declaration through Polish Telegraph Agency on April 30th, 1943. This stated that: "in the declaration published on April 28th the Polish Government did not refer to its request to the Committee of the International Red Cross for an investigation of the graves of Polish officers near Smolensk, the discovery of which is being used by German propaganda. In its reply to the Polish Government the Committee of the International Red Cross explained the difficulties with which it is confronted in fulfilling this request. In view of these circumstances, the Polish Government considers its request to be withdrawn."

This co-operative gesture made in general a favourable impression on Anglo-Saxon opinion. Hopes of a speedy solution of the conflict grew especially as the London evening press of April 29th reported that an exchange of views on the Polish-Russian question had taken place between London and Washington on the one hand, and Moscow on the other "on the highest level."

Furthermore Poland's National Day on May 3rd gave the British Government an opportunity of indicating its attitude. Thus in a written message to the Polish Nation, Mr. Churchill emphasised that "Poles, both in Poland and abroad, are united in their determination to carry on the fight against the German op-

¹"No Pole to-day can contemplate deliberate co-operation with Germany and if the charge of such co-operation in M. Molotov's note was seriously intended, the implication will be justly and indignantly repudiated". ("The Times", 23.4.43.)

pressors of their Fatherland", and Sir John Anderson, officially representing H. M. Government at the 3rd May celebration pointed out that "Poland has been to us a loyal and faithful Ally . . . and throughout the length and breadth of Poland not even one Quisling has been found."

These official statements being in the nature of an indirect answer to the Soviet accusations, the Soviet Government probably realised that a pro-Polish gesture was called for in view of Anglo-Saxon opinion. On May 4th, 1943, replying to a question put to him by the correspondent of the London Times and the New York Times, Stalin publicly proclaimed that the Government of the U. S. S. R. "unquestionably desired" that after the defeat of Hitlerite Germany "strong and independent Poland" would arise, with which he would like to be able to establish post-war relations "upon the fundaments of solid good neighbourly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire, upon the fundaments of alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans, the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland."

The effect of this declaration was a sudden growth of optimism in Anglo-Saxon circles which caused the press to cease writing about the Polish-Soviet conflict. Since it was considered to be practically speaking, solved.

But the Soviet Government very soon found it necessary to disillusion the Western Allies on this point and Vice Commissar Vyshinsky summoned representatives of the British and American press in Moscow on May 6th, 1943, in order to make a long statement on the Polish question.

In this statement Vyshinsky said among other things that "the present Polish Government, under the influence of pro-Hitlerite elements within it and in the Polish press, provoked the well-known decision of the Soviet Government to suspend relations with the Polish Government, while Polish officials, Polish press and Polish radio continue to circulate numerous false statements concerning Soviet-Polish relations. In so doing they very often take advantage of the circumstance that wide public circles are not informed of the real facts bearing on these relations."

Dwelling on the Soviet version of Polish-Soviet relations, Vyshinsky accused General Anders' army evacuated to the Middle East, of being unwilling to fight the Germans and the Polish Embassy in the U. S. S. R. of carrying on espionage activities hostile to the U. S. S. R. instead of promoting the welfare of Polish citizens. Having evidently forgotten that he himself, on 14.9.41, had given the number of such citizens released from confinement on Soviet territory as 345,511 (see above p. 157), on this occasion he remarked that this number was "in fact not great."

In answer to Vyshinsky's statement, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a short explanation on May 7th. "Fearing that M. Vyshinsky's statement would not contribute to the establishment of the much desired harmony in Polish-Soviet relations and in the whole allied camp", he confined himself to "denying a few facts", treating the accusation implied in the declaration concerning espionage work for Germany as "an insinuation so fantastic" as not to call for a denial or an answer.

13. Further German propaganda action.

(a) *Reports of "Volksdeutsche" from Kozielsk.*—It has already been mentioned (see p. 116) that a dozen or more Polish citizens of German descent were released from the Griazovietz camp in November, 1940, as a result of intervention by the German Ambassador. After the Katyn revelations, they drew up reports of the conditions of life in the Soviet prisoner of war camps at Kozielsk, Pavlishtchev Bor, and Griazovietz, which were afterwards widely used as German propaganda.

(b) *European medical commission.*—The attitude of the International Red Cross in making its participation in the commission to identify the bodies dependent on the agreement of "all interested parties" gave rise to great dissatisfaction on the part of the Germans. German and Italian radio commentators expressed their indignation that this neutral humanitarian organisation should shirk its proper duties for purely political reasons.

As the attitude of the International Red Cross, in view of the U. S. S. R.'s behaviour, constituted a virtual refusal to participate in the Katyn investigations, the Germans proceeded on their own to organise a "neutral" European commission of experts to investigate the Katyn discovery. At the request of Dr. Conti, Director of the Reich Health Services (Reichsgesundheitsführer), 12 doctors went to Katyn, mostly professors of Forensic Medicine and Criminology. Their object, according to the official protocol, was "to examine the scene of the crime at Katyn in order to contribute to an explanation of this event, which is unique of its kind."

The following countries were represented on the Commission:

- 1 neutral country (Switzerland),
- 4 occupied countries (Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Czechoslovakia),
- 6 satellite countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Croatia, Rumania, Slovakia and Hungary), and Italy.

Their names were as follows:

1. Belgium—Dr. Speleers, Professor of Ophthalmology at Ghent University.
2. Bulgaria—Dr. Markov, Lecturer in Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Sofia University.
3. Denmark—Dr. Tramsen, Prosecutor at the Institute of Forensic Medicine, Copenhagen.
4. Finland—Dr. Saxen, Professor of Anatomy and Pathology at Helsinki University.
5. Italy—Dr. Palmieri, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Naples University.
6. Croatia—Dr. Miloslavich, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Zagreb University.
7. Holland—Dr. de Bulet, Professor of Anatomy, Groningen University.
8. Czechoslovakia—Dr. Hájek, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Prague University.
9. Rumania—Dr. Birkle, Forensic Medicine Doctor to the Rumanian Ministry of Justice and Senior Assistant at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Bucharest.
10. Switzerland—Dr. Naville, Professor of Forensic Medicine at Geneva University.
11. Slovakia—Dr. Šubík, Professor of Anatomy and Pathology at Bratislava University. Head of the State Health Service in Slovakia.
12. Hungary—Dr. Orsós, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology, Budapest University.

Also present at the work and the meetings of the Commission were:

1. Dr. Buhtz, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Breslau University, who was put in charge of the exhumations at Katyn by the Commander in Chief of the German Armed Forces,
2. Medecin-inspecteur Dr. Costedoat, who was instructed by the Head of the French Government to assist at the work of the commission.

In the course of three days spent at Katyn (28th–30th April, 1943) this Commission of experts:

1. interviewed several witnesses from among the local Russian population,
2. acquainted themselves with the work of exhumation and post mortem examinations which had already been carried out,
3. performed post mortem examinations on several bodies selected as special cases,
4. members of the Commission personally carried out post mortem examinations on 9 untouched bodies,
5. members of the Commission signed a protocol of their visit and gave a forensic medical opinion.

Below are quoted the title and introduction as well as extracts from the document, which was signed by the 12 European professors:

“Protokoll, aufgenommen anlässlich der Untersuchung von Massengräbern polnischer Offiziere im Walde von Katyn bei Smolensk, die durch eine Kommission führender Vertreter der Gerichtlichen Medizin und Kriminalistik europäischer Hochschulen und anderer namhafter medizinischer Hochschullehrer durchgeführt wurde. In der Zeit vom 28. bis 30.4.43 hat eine Kommission führender Vertreter der Gerichtlichen Medizin und Kriminalistik europäischer Hochschulen und anderer namhafter medizinischer Hochschullehrer die Massengräber polnischer Offiziere im Walde von Katyn bei Smolensk einer eingehenden wissenschaftlichen Untersuchung unterzogen”.

(“Protocol drawn up on the occasion of the examination of mass graves of Polish officers in the Katyn wood, near Smolensk, which examination was carried out by a Commission of leading representatives of forensic medicine and criminology from European universities and other distinguished university lecturers of medicine. From 28th–30th April, 1943, a Commission of leading representatives of forensic medicine and criminology from European universities and other distinguished university lecturers of medicine undertook a detailed scientific examination of the mass graves of Polish officers in the Katyn wood, near Smolensk.”)

The Protocol did not mention the names of witnesses examined by the commission and did not quote their evidence, but gave the following summary: the wit-

nesses "stated that in the months of March and April, 1940, large rail convoys of Polish officers were unloaded almost daily at Gnezdovo station, near Katyn, were driven in prison cars to the Katyn wood, and they were never seen again."

According to the Protocol, seven mass graves had been opened by 30.4.43, and the number of bodies contained in the largest of these was estimated at 2,500. 982 bodies had been exhumed from the graves and 70% of them had already been identified. In order to identify the remainder, documents found on them would first have to be carefully examined. Before the arrival of the commission the exhumed bodies had already been examined and on most of them post mortems had been carried out by Professor Buhtz and his assistants.

The Protocol in describing the results of the medical examinations and research stated that all the bodies so far exhumed showed that individuals had been killed by a shot in the back of the head, at the base of the skull, which passed through the occipital bone and emerged, usually, near the edge of the scalp on the forehead, or in very rare cases lower down. All shots were fired in the opinion of the Commission from a pistol of less than 8 mm. calibre; in the majority of cases only one shot was fired, more rarely two, and in one instance as many as three.

"From the crushing of the skull and marks of gunpowder on the occipital bone near the hole made by the entrance of the bullet, as well as from the fact that in almost every case the bullet entered the head at the same place", the Commission concluded that the shots were fired from pistols pressed to the head or at very close range. This was also corroborated by the fact that the bullet had in every case, taken practically the same course with only a few small variations. The fact that all wounds were absolutely identical and that all the shots had been localised in a small area of the occipital bone lead the Commission to the conclusion that the shooting had been done by "experienced hands". The Commission further stated that on many of the bodies the arms were tied together in exactly the same manner and in some cases the clothes and skin showed signs of being pierced by a four-edged bayonet.

This latter statement which though not directly referring to the perpetrators of the murders, was of special significance since, unlike all other armies, which used flat, single-edged bayonets, the Russian army alone used and still uses four-edged bayonets.

Further paragraphs of the Protocol gave additional indirect clues as to the perpetration of the murders, stating that the officers' arms were in each case bound in exactly the same way as those of Russian civilians, also dug up in the Katyn wood but buried at a much earlier date. These had been murdered in exactly the same manner as had the Polish officers.

On the skull of one of the dead officers the Commission observed traces of another shot which had not pierced the skull, but only dented the outside of the bone. From this fact the Commission concluded that, to avoid transporting the bodies, the murder had been perpetrated right on the edge of the graves or in the grave itself, presuming that this second shot had killed another victim, emerged from the skull, hit the head of a body already lying in the pit but, having lost its velocity had not pierced the bone.

The Protocol then proceeded to a description of the graves. These were situated in a clearing in the wood which was thoroughly levelled and planted with young spruce trees. In the opinion of members of the Commission and of the expert forester, von Herff, whose opinion was sought, those spruces were at least five years old and had been planted in that place three years before, but had not grown well on account of the shade of big trees. The Protocol thus corrected the statement previously made in the D. N. B. (Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau) communiqué and in the German press (see p. 236) to the effect that the spruces planted on the graves were exactly "drei Jahre alt" (three years old).¹

The Protocol described the mass graves as lying adjacent to one another on the sides of small hills, of clean sand. Only part of the graves reached the water just below the surface of the earth.

The bodies were nearly all lying face downwards, closely wedged side by side and piled one on top of another, they were neatly arranged near the sides of the grave, but not so neatly the centre; the legs were in nearly every case straightened and all the facts led the commission to conclude that they had been systematically packed in the graves.

¹ In an interview with a representative of the Deutsche Zeitung in Croatia, (No. 108 of 11.5.43), Professor Edward Miloslavich, a member of the Commission, gave further details concerning the age of the spruce trees. "On closer inspection of cross sections of these spruces it was seen that of their five annual rings the middle one was undeveloped, while the two last were well-formed. This shows that the trees were transplanted in the third year of growth, that is in the spring of 1940."

The Commission had no doubts that the uniforms on the bodies possessed all the characteristic features of Polish uniforms: buttons, distinctions, decorations, shape of boots, marks on linen etc. The clothes were winter ones there being many furs, leather jerkins, pullovers, scarves and Polish officers' caps. Only very few of the dead were not in officers uniforms, and of these one was a priest.²

As the uniforms exactly fitted the bodies, and the underlinen was close up, and belt buckles were properly fastened, the Commission concluded that the victims had been buried in the uniforms which they were wearing at the time of their death.

The Protocol affirmed that no watches or rings were found on the bodies, although the victims must have possessed the former up to the last moment, since exact times were stated in notes found on the bodies (compare Major Solski's note on the convoy of 7.4.40, see p. 64). Precious metal objects were only found carefully hidden on a very few bodies. A large number of them, however, had gold teeth. A considerable number of Polish bank notes and coins were also found as well as Polish cigarette boxes and matches, and in some cases cigarettes and holders bearing the inscription "Kozielsk". Documents found on the bodies (diaries, correspondence, newspapers etc.) referred to the period from the autumn of 1939 to March and April, 1940. Up to the end of the commission's visit, the latest date appearing in these documents was that of a Russian newspaper of 22.4.40 which was found on one of the bodies.

The Protocol went on to state that the bodies were in varying states of decomposition, depending on their position in the grave and their relation to other bodies. While those lying in the upper layers and near the edges of the grave were comparatively dry, in some cases even mummified, those in the centre formed one humid mass. In view of the fact that neighbouring bodies were stuck together by thick cadaveric fluid, and in particular, that they bore marks corresponding to those on the bodies against which they were pressed, the commission concluded that the bodies had not been previously touched in the grave and were lying in their original position.

No insects were found on the bodies, nor any traces of them which lead the commission to the conclusion that the murder and burial of the bodies must have taken place in winter, at a time when there are no insects.

The last paragraph of the Protocol referred to examinations of the cerebral matter performed on a large number of skulls by Professor Orsos method (these examinations were supposed to establish the time of death and burial), and stated that the skull of one of the bodies (no. 526) found in an upper layer of a large mass grave showed "very distinct" signs indicating that death had occurred at least three years ago.

At the conclusion of the Protocol the verdict of the Commission was given in the following words:

"The commission investigated in the Katyn wood the mass graves of Polish officers, seven of which have already been opened. The 982 bodies so far recovered from these graves have been examined, on some of them post mortems have been held and 70% have been identified.

In every case the cause of death was shown to be shooting in the back of the head. From the testimony of witnesses and from diaries, newspapers etc. found on the bodies it is apparent that the shooting took place during the months of March and April, 1940. The detailed results described in this protocol of the examination of mass graves and of autopsies performed on individual bodies of Polish officers, entirely agree on this point."

The whole text of the protocol was published in many German newspapers (e. g. *Völkischer Beobachter* of 4.5.43) and provided new material for German propaganda throughout the whole of Europe.

Despite the efforts of the German authorities to give the commission of experts an international, neutral and unbiased character, independent opinion did not regard its report as constituting the final word on the question. The most serious objection to the commission was that however distinguished were the experts that composed it, too many of them represented countries dominated by Germany and too few came from neutral states.

² It appeared from the report in the *Berliner Bärson Zeitung* (No. 197 of 29.4.43) and from later German publications on Katyn that this was the body of an Army chaplain, Major Jan Ziolkowski of Jaroslav, who was not removed from Kozielsk with the other chaplains on 23.12.39 but shared the fate of the rest of the officers from that camp when it was liquidated in April and May 1940 (see p. 23). The bodies of the other chaplains removed from Kozielsk at Christmas, 1939, were not found at Katyn. It is strange that the Protocol of the commission does not mention that the body of one woman was found there, as was stated in the report of the journalists who visited Katyn, (see p. 237) as this would have tallied with the fact that there was one woman among the officers at Kozielsk. (see p. 22).

Consequently the protocol of the "European Commission of Experts" was used only for a comparatively short time as German propaganda. Similarly reports, articles and lectures by members of the Commission after their return from Katyn did not have very much effect.

c) *Facilities for visiting the Katyn graves.*—In order to give the Katyn affair the widest possibly publicity, the German authorities accorded extensive facilities to anyone wishing to see for himself the place of the murder and its victims. For several months, therefore, Smolensk became a specific "tourist" centre for the whole of Europe. Excursions for journalists, politicians, writers, doctors, prisoners of war, etc., were officially organised by the Germans and often even transported by air to Smolensk, and special arrangements were made for the visit of large numbers of officers and soldiers of the German and satellite armies to Katyn. Placards announcing the discovery of the graves and promising pecuniary awards to anyone able to supply additional information about the murders to the German authorities were posted up all over Smolensk and a special section of the German Command in Smolensk was detailed to give every possible assistance to visitors to Katyn, arranging transport and accommodation, supplying guides, etc. The German authorities made no objections to visitors establishing contact with the local population, and they were also encouraged to send letters describing their impressions of the spot.

The following is an extract from the account of a Polish citizen, written after his arrival on Swiss territory:

"In May, 1943, I went with a whole convoy of cars to Smolensk, where the Katyn sensation was the talk of the day. At every turn enormous placards proclaimed the Bolshevik crime. A special section of the Smolensk Command had been formed to explain the details of the Katyn affair and a Polish Red Cross delegation was already working there. Officers were taken in organised groups to the scene of death—willingly or unwillingly they had to go. On the second day after my arrival at Smolensk I reported to the German Command and asked to be shown Katyn. I was very cordially received and when the commanding officer, a Major, learnt that I was from Silesia, his friendliness increased 100%. 'You certainly know many Poles in the German Government. Tell them, when you return, how the Bolsheviks treated Polish officers', were his first words on learning that I was from Silesia. At 4.30 a. m. we started, and with five German officers I drove 25 kilometers (about 16 miles) to Katyn." After describing the appearance of the graves and their contents, the report continues:

"While the officers conducted a rather long conversation with the doctor, I went out of the hut. I still cannot believe that the Bolsheviks were capable of such a monstrous crime. I was always inclined to be skeptical about the German communiqués about Katyn. But here one can have no doubts; the naked, ghastly truth speaks for itself. Even a stranger must realise that the Katyn affair was not an artificial trick of propaganda, but true. I followed a path leading to the wood and met an old man of 85 years carrying wood. I entered into conversation with the old man, who was at first suspicious, but later, when I said I was a Pole, he told me quite openly the story of Katyn. He told me how for three months lorries had arrived, from which Polish officers had embarked under G. P. U. escort; he told of the shots which echoed on the Katyn hills, of how the population was forbidden to approach the place of death. That man was not lying, that could be seen at once. So that was indeed the truth, the ghastly truth . . ."

And here are extracts from a report based on the accounts of two Frenchmen who were deported from France to the East in the Todt organisation and employed at Katyn during May and June, 1943:

"One of the boys, who spoke broken Russian, conversed with two peasants, one old and the other younger, about forty, with a wife. The story of these peasants is as follows:—Polish prisoners were unloaded at Smolensk and the proposal was put to them that they should join the Soviet Army with the promise of promotion to one rank higher. The proposal was made to each one in turn, starting with the lowest rank, and if they refused they were told that they would go back to Poland, but on foot, and were sent along the road towards Poland. Several kilometres from Smolensk was the Katyn wood, two or three kilometres from the village of Katyn. Here they were ordered to dig trenches and were told there was to be a camp (the second peasant said they had been told a hospital would be erected there). Then the first group was shot, and so for two weeks shots were constantly heard . . . According to those same peasants a riot broke out when the last group were shot, and for that reason the fourth grave looks entirely different from the others. They were apparently thrown into a deep pit, many of them lying on their backs, others face downwards, some on their knees, others

with their legs stretched out in positions as though they had been thrown in from above. All had many shots in their bodies. . . ."

The boys reported further that very many German generals visited the graves and that everyone was sent through Katyn on the way to the front. The boys said also that though they were normally allowed to send only one card a month to their families, when they wanted to write about Katyn they could write as much as they wished, were provided with all the paper they needed and their letters were sent by "Luftpost."

d) *Records of the Smolensk Branch of the N. K. V. D.*—From June, 1943, material from the records of the Smolensk N. K. V. D. Branch was used by the Germans press for propaganda purposes. According to the Germans these records were removed to the rear when Smolensk was taken by them in 1941 and were only remembered on the discovery of the Katyn murders.

From information said to have been found in these records published in the German press during the first half of June, the following interesting facts emerge.

1. *Who was responsible for Polish officers?*

The Smolensk N. K. V. D. Branch remained from the Autumn of 1939 in constant touch with the State Security Central Office in Moscow on all matters connected with Polish prisoners of war, sending there lists of prisoners: officers, doctors, army chaplains etc., and detailed reports and acting only on its instructions. In particular the central office in Moscow instructed Detachment III of the Smolensk N. K. V. D., commanded by Colonel Kuprianov of the State Security with 1st Lieutenant Leibkind and 2nd Lieutenant Sarykovitsch, both State Security officers, to find Polish prisoners of war who knew good English and French with a view to their being sent to the West as agents of the Soviet Intelligence Service.

2. *"Preparation" of prisoners.*

Interesting facts were published concerning the "detailed procedure" for obtaining the consent of individual prisoners to collaborate with the N. K. V. D. But most of the material published in the German press about the activities of Soviet agents among the Poles and the results of investigations did not refer to Kozielsk II (the missing prisoners) but to Kozielsk III (internees). The German press was however entirely unaware of this.

3. *"Transferred to an unknown camp."*

On the basis of these records the "Ostdeutscher Beobachter" of 8.6.43 described the interesting case of a Polish citizen, Alexandra Urbanska, who was deported with her family from Poland to Rodnikovka, province of Aktyubinsk, Kazakstan. When she requested the N. K. V. D. to inform her of the whereabouts of her husband, Lieutenant Richard Urbanski, who had been at Kozielsk but from whom she had received no news since March, 1940, an official of the Smolensk N. K. V. D., Filipovitch was alleged to have made the following note:

"inform her that he has been transferred to an unknown camp 6.5.40."

(This date should probably be 1941). The body of Urbanski, added the Ostdeutscher Beobachter, was found in the Katyn graves.)

It is interesting to note that one of the Polish volunteers who arrived in Great Britain from Russia in 1942, reported a similar case to his authorities. He said that his father, a policeman in Zdolbunov (Poland), had been arrested there by the Soviet authorities and was subsequently sent to the camp for Polish prisoners of war at Ostashkov, from where he communicated by letter with his family in Poland.

On April 13th, 1940, his family (wife, son and daughter) were deported by the Soviet authorities from Zdolbunov to Southern Kazakstan, from whence they still tried to correspond with their father. Not receiving any reply from him, the deported family approached various local and central Soviet authorities—the N. K. V. D., public prosecutors etc., even to Stalin himself—with a request for information about the fate of the prisoner and his whereabouts. After a long delay, in the spring of 1941 they received the following answer, signed by the public prosecutor of the Ostashkov district: "The camp in which your father was living was liquidated in the spring of 1940. The present whereabouts of your father are unknown." (Witness 36).

(c) *Publication of lists of identified victims.*—Besides publishing facts of this kind as propaganda, the Germans, with the view to sustaining public interest in Katyn, published over a period of several months new lists of identified victims.

These lists were not completely accurate. The identification of bodies was certainly not easy. Many of the documents found on the bodies could only be read with great difficulty and not always accurately. Many names, after being

translated several times (from Polish into Russian, Russian into German, and from German back to Polish) were changed. Consequently, in several instances families were officially informed by the Germans that bodies of people who were in reality still alive, or had been arrested during the German occupation, had been found at Katyn. These cases in particular gave rise to doubts about the truth of the German revelations. Without excluding the possibility that the Germans in some instances acted in bad faith and tried "to put into the Katyn graves" victims of crimes committed by them elsewhere, it must be stated that these were only isolated cases, while most of the several thousand names published were of people who had really been taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1939 deported to the U. S. S. R., and had subsequently vanished.

The publication of lists of identified Katyn victims had special significance in Poland, where many of the families, friends and acquaintances of the vanished Polish prisoners of war were still living. These people who up till then had boycotted the German-sponsored Polish press and wireless eagerly waited for the publication of the lists, but all the evidence goes to show that the Katyn propaganda in no way diminished their hostility to the Germans.

CHAPTER XX. FINAL GERMAN OFFICIAL VERSION

14. "*Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*".

All who had inspected the Katyn graves emphasized the intolerable stench of thousands of exhumed bodies. As the weather grew warmer the stench necessarily became stronger and working conditions deteriorated. The Germans were, therefore, able to explain the "temporary" suspension of exhumations on 3.6.43 as being necessary under sanitary regulations, on account of the "summer heat and great plague of flies" (*Amtliches Material* p. 40). For some reason, however, they did not announce this decision for a whole month, and lists of identified bodies continued to be published and propaganda put out. It was only on July 3rd that the "*Völkischer Beobachter*" reported the suspension of work during the summer heat and gave a general report on the work already completed.

In mid-September, 1943, on the instructions of the German Foreign Office, the Deutsche Informationsstelle (German Information Centre) in Berlin published a comprehensive volume of 350 pages entitled "*Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*" (Official Material Concerning the Mass Murder at Katyn).

Since the course of military operations prevented the Germans from resuming work at Katyn in the following Autumn, as they had allegedly intended, the "*Amtliches Material*" is in fact the final summary of the work accomplished by the Germans and constitute the most complete presentation of the German evidence concerning the Katyn murder. This chapter is, therefore devoted to analysis of this evidence.

Apart from an introduction of a few pages, a list of 4,143 exhumed and partly identified bodies and one section containing numerous illustrations, the *Amtliches Material* was made up of a collection of documents, some printed in full and others summarised, divided into three Parts:

I. Factual situation. pp.

II. Appeal to the International Red Cross. pp.

III. The diplomatic handling of this case by the Allies. pp.

Part I which is the most interesting, is devoted to the German version of the facts about the Katyn murder. It is divided into 5 chapters and contains the following documents:

A. Discovery of the mass graves.

1. Final evidence of the Secretary of the German Secret Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*), Voss, regarding the excavation of bodies of Polish officers, dated 26.4.43.

2. Report of the Field Police on the commencement of exhumations, dated 27.3.43.

B. Kose Gory (Goat Hills)—a former place of execution of the Tsheka.¹

3. Police record of the examination of witness Kuzma Godunov dated 5.4.43.

4. Police record of examination of witness Ivan Kryvosertsev dated 4.4.43.

5. Police record of examination of witness Michael Zigulev, dated 6.4.43.

6. Extract from report of the Field Police, dated 10.4.43.

C. Transportation and liquidation of victims in the Spring of 1940.

7. Police records of examinations of local witnesses concerning the arrival of prisoners:

¹ Secret Police in Russia, predecessor of present N. K. V. D.

- A. Ivan Krivosertsev on 27.2.43,
- B. Matvei Zakharov on 2.4.43,
- C. Grigori Silvestrov on 1.4.43,
- D. Ivan Andreyev on 28.2.43.
8. Police record of the examination of witness Parfen Kisselev concerning the discovery of the mass grave by Polish workers in 1942, dated 27.2.43.
9. Police record of the swearing in of witnesses Kisselev, Krivosertsev, Andreyev, Silvetsov, Zakharov and Zigulev on 18.4.43.
10. Extract from the report of a former prisoner at Kozielsk, a Volksdeutscher named Glaeser.
11. Extract from Major Solski's diary, found at Katyn (see p. 64).
- D. Identification of victims.
12. Extract from report of Field Police dated 10.4.43.
13. Final report of Field Police dated 10.6.43.
14. Report on the visit of the Polish delegation to Katyn, dated 13.4.43.
- E. Records and results of post-mortem examinations performed by German police sergeant, and the international Medical Commission.
15. Report of the chief police surgeon, Professor Gerhard Buhtz (the basic document comprising 56 pages).
16. Records of post mortem performed by German police surgeons.
17. Protocol of the International Medical Commission, dated 30.4.43.
18. Results of post mortems performed by members of the International Medical Commission.
15. *Story of the Katyn "discovery" and preparatory work.*

According to Kisselev's evidence given on 27.2.43, in the Summer of 1942, 10 Poles, working in labour gangs at Gnesdovo, asked him to show them the burial place of their compatriots who had been shot by the N. K. V. D. Kisselev said that he had conducted them to the Katyn wood, showed them the artificial mounds of sand and even supplied them with tools for excavating them, and that the Poles had later come to him and told him that they had actually found Polish bodies and had marked the place with two birch crosses.

For reasons and circumstances not explained in the Amtliches Material, the German Field Police (Group 570—Aussenkommando bei der Heresgruppe Mitte) apparently did not learn of this discovery until the beginning of February, 1943, when despite the frost they immediately began experimental excavations, in the course of which they came across bodies in Polish uniforms at a depth of 2 metres (2 yds 8 ins). Only then did the German Field Police make their first records of the evidence of witnesses, a summary of which is given here.

On 27.2.43 Ivan Krivosertsev of Novo Bateki, aged 28, employed in the German civil guard, testified that in 1940 he was working at the Gniezdovo kolkhoz, near the railway, and noticed that during March and April, 3 or 4 trains with 3 or 4 prison trucks arrived at Gniezdovo station every day from Smolensk. His sister, Daria, who had since been evacuated by the Russians, told him that she had herself seen Polish soldiers, civilians and a few priests disembarked from these trucks and loaded into closed lorries. Although he had never seen it himself or heard it from his sister, yet, it was said everywhere in the district that, the lorries took these people to the N. K. V. D. at Kose Gory, where they were shot.

On 27.2.43 Parfen Kisselev, aged 72, who had lived in Kose Gory since 1907, in addition to his evidence about the showing of the graves to the Poles told how for about 10 years the little castle on the Dnieper has been used as a sanatorium for N. K. V. D. officials, and consequently the local inhabitants had been forbidden to enter that part of the wood which was surrounded by wire and guarded by armed sentries. In the spring of 1940, for a period of 4 or 5 weeks 3 or 4 closed lorries had arrived there daily, loaded with people, who had apparently been shot there. Once when he had been at Gniezdovo station he had seen men being transferred from railway trucks to lorries. Although he had never dared to approach the wood, he had heard from his house the sound of shots and human cries. He said that it seemed very probable that they had been shot there and that the local population were of the opinion that about 10,000 Poles had been shot. He said that after the district had been taken by the Germans, he went to the wood to see if it was true, but he had been disappointed in not finding the bodies, but only mounds, which he had subsequently showed to the Polish workmen.

On 28.2.43 Ivan Andreyev, aged 26, a locksmith from Novo Bateki, also stated that from mid-March to mid-April, 1940, 3 or 4 trains with 2 or 3 prison trucks had arrived daily at Gniezdovo station. The inmates of those trucks had been transferred to closed lorries. They had mostly been Polish soldiers, whom he had recognised by their caps, but there had also been civilians. The lorries had

driven off in the direction of Katyn and after having gone $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres ($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles) had turned off the Kose Gory, where—he had been told, though he himself had not seen it—these people had been shot by the N. K. V. D.

After making records of this evidence, the Field Police sent its first report to the Headquarters of the Central Army Group and on 1.3.43 the report was shown to the Chief police surgeon, Professor Buhtz, who was attached to the Headquarters of the Central Army Group. After visiting the spot to satisfy himself as to the truth of the police report, Professor Buhtz started the preparatory work of excavation. During March a large wooden house was brought to the Katyn wood from the neighbouring village and used for post mortem work. Preparations for excavations, transportation of bodies, post mortem examinations, marking the bodies and preserving the articles found on them etc., were made and the field laboratory of forensic medicine at Smolensk was also suitably adopted for the large amount of work awaiting it.

When these preparations had been completed for medico-legal work and the Field Police had organised a labour gang composed of 35 inhabitants of Katyn village, and 7 Russian civil guards to act as night watchmen and to protect the bodies from looters, excavations of the graves already thawed were commenced on 29.3.43., on the official orders of the Central Army Group Command.

At the same time the intensive examination of witnesses began.

The following witnesses were examined:

On 1.4.43 Grigory Silvestrov, aged 48, a workman living at Novo Bateki, said in his evidence that he lived near Gniezdovo station and had seen in the evenings people being transferred from prison trucks to three prison lorries, so-called "tehorny voron" (black crow—see p. 51) during April and May, 1940. When the lorries were full and prisoners luggage had been loaded on to a separate lorry, the convoy left the station and drove in the direction of Katyn. In 20 or 25 minutes the same lorries returned for the next party. The reloading usually took place in the evening but sometimes went on during the night. In twenty-four hours the convoy of lorries made ten journeys to and fro. This went on for about four weeks. The prisoners were all men, mostly in foreign officers' uniforms, but there were also people in civilian clothes, some of them old, a few even walking on crutches. He had not known to which country the uniforms belonged and various rumours had circulated among the local inhabitants some saying they were Poles, others maintaining they were Finns. There had also been rumours that they were taken to the resthouse some distance from Gniezdovo station and shot. Silvestrov said that he thought that was true because the local population, who had hitherto been permitted to look for mushrooms in that region had been forbidden to go there during the period when convoys were arriving. His evidence also referred to the "Jewish type" of N. K. V. D. men escorting the prisoners. This statement was afterwards widely used by Nazi propaganda.

On 2.4.43 Matvei Zakharov, aged 50, the headman of the village of Novo Bateki, testified that from 1937–41 he had worked on the railway as a coupler at Smolensk station where he had seen 5 or 6 Pullman prison trucks arrive together with goods trains in March 1940. Of these 2 or 3 had remained at Smolensk and the rest had gone on to Gniezdovo. He had heard from the escort that the prisoners in those trucks had come from the camp at Kozielsk, which, he thought, was situated somewhere on the Riazan-Ural line, because the railway records said that the trains came to Smolensk on the Riazan-Ural line, travelling via Kozlov, Tambov and Yelnya (?). He said that in the course of his duties he had had the opportunity of seeing the interior of the empty trucks and he gave a fairly accurate description of them in his evidence (see p. 57), stating also that the escort had told him that 18–20 prisoners were crammed into the compartments, which were intended for 6 people. He was also alleged to have had the opportunity of seeing prisoners disembarking at Smolensk (?) station and being loaded into prison lorries, which drove off in the direction of Gniezdovo. The prisoners had been according to him in Polish uniforms, mostly officers, but a certain number of people had worn civilian clothes; he had also noticed a few priests. These movements were said to have continued for 28 days, a fact which he had allegedly confirmed by reference to his duty notes.

On 5.4.43 Kuzma Godunov, aged 67, an agricultural labourer living at Novo Bateki, testified that he had lived all his life at Novo Bateki, where he had been employed as a groom from 1918 onwards. In 1921 he had seen 10–15 people being taken to Kose Gory by the Tsheka (secret police) to be shot. Among them he had recognised and spoke to two of his cousins. He had also heard from acquaintances that their son, who had been condemned to death in Smolensk by the "Troyka" (Secret Police Committee of 3) as an anti-communist, had also

been shot at Kose Gory in 1921. Thereafter until 1931 the Kose Gory wood had not been used for executions and had been open to everyone. Children gathering mushrooms there had often told him that they had come across the graves.

On 5.4.43 Krivosertsev, employed in the German civil guard (see p. 301) was again interrogated on the question of the former use of Kose Gory as a place of execution. Amongst other things he said that he had heard from his parents that after 1918 Kose Gory was used by the Tsheka as a place of execution and subsequently by the G. P. U., the O. G. P. U. and finally by the N. K. V. D. But until 1931 the local population had been allowed to gather mushrooms and berries there; the witness himself had done so in his boyhood.

At that time he had heard from grown-up people that there was fresh graves there. From 1931 onwards it had been forbidden to enter Kose Gory. In 1934 a large Rest House for N. K. V. D. officials had been built there. From 1940 Kose Gory had been guarded from the outside by sentries and dogs. In March and April of that year many prison trucks had arrived at Gniezdovo station and the prisoners had been taken in "tchorny voron" in the direction of Katyn. The witness himself had heard no shots from the region of Kose Gory.

On 6.4.43 the last witness named in the Amtliches Material, Michael Zigulev, was interrogated. He was 28 years old, lived at Novo Bateki and from 1942 had also been employed in the German civil guard. He testified that as a child he had heard that Smolensk prisoners were shot at Kose Gory and had himself often seen open lorries driving in that direction full of prisoners, surrounded by armed guards. In 1927, when grazing horses nearby, he and other children had seen 11 persons being unloaded from a lorry which had arrived from the direction of Smolensk and then escorted to Kose Gory. Afterwards he had heard shots. When the escort had returned and the lorry departed the children had decided to look at the place of execution. He said that he alone had lost courage at the last moment and had remained behind but that his friends had reported that they had found traces of blood beside the graves, which were so shallow that the arms and legs of the victims were protruding from them.

As the evidence taken by the Field Police was not considered from the legal point of view to have sufficient validity the Central Army Group Command ordered the witnesses already examined by the police to appear before a Military Court at the Central Army Group to give evidence again under oath. They were accordingly sworn in before a judge on 18.4.43. On this occasion attempts were apparently made to extract from them further details more suitable for propaganda purposes but the majority of witnesses confined themselves to confirming their previous testimony before the court and only a few of them enlarged upon it. Among these was the coupler Zakharov, who after he had been sworn in additionally testified that, although he had not seen all the prison trucks, those which he had seen had always contained two or three priests, wearing long robes and he had been told that they were Polish priests.

It should be stressed that, although this additional evidence was in glaring contradiction to his first testimony, in which he stated that he had seen the inside of empty prison trucks only (see above), this did not deter the German judge, Dr. Conrad, from stating at the end of the protocol of the court proceedings that all the witnesses had made on him an impression of complete reliability and that he was convinced they had told all they knew.

16. *The place of execution and its surroundings.*

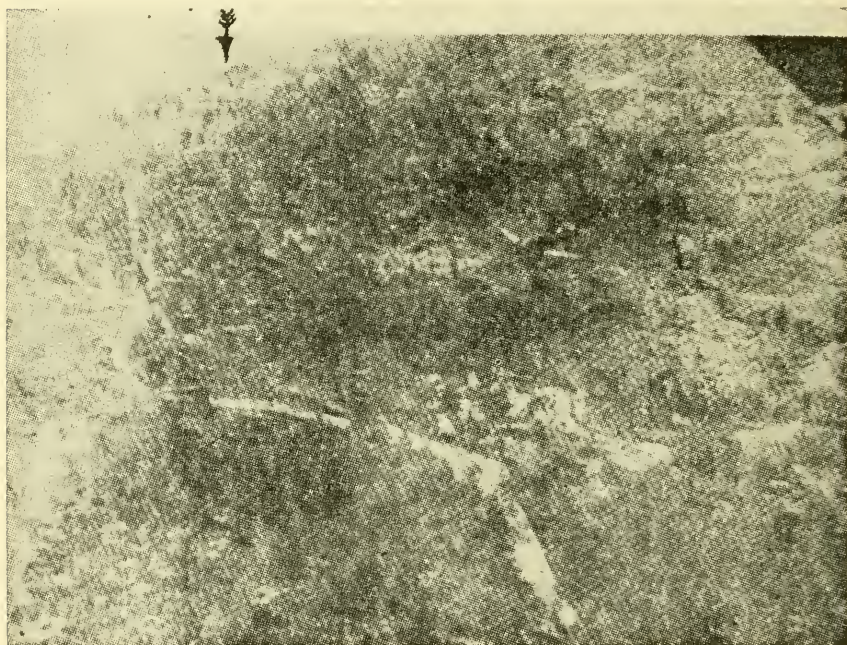
From the sketch attached to Amtliches Material (p. 274) it appears that the graves of the Polish officers were situated near the Smolensk-Vitebsk main road between Sofievka and Katyn (see map attached.) At a distance of about 8 miles (13 kilometres) from Smolensk this road crosses the Smolensk-Orsha railway, at the point where it bridges the river Olsha near a place called Sofiovka. Less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile East of this bridge is the station of Gniezdovaia (Gniezdovo). Along the Smolensk-Vitebsk road, about 2 kilometres ($1\frac{1}{4}$ miles) West of the bridge and roughly $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 kilometres ($1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles) from the Gniezdovaia railway station, a woody lane branches off the main road Southwards, leading to the "Little Castle on the Dnieper"—the N. K. V. D. Rest House situated on the Northern bank of the river Dnieper less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the main road.

About half way along (coming Northwards from the "Little Castle") this lane forks, the right branch leading Eastwards towards some farm buildings (probably Kose Gory, where the witness Kisselev lived). About 100 metres South of the main road the two branches are connected by another lane so that a rough triangle is formed, the sides of which are three woody lanes. Within this triangle lay the mass graves of Russians from the time of the Revolution.

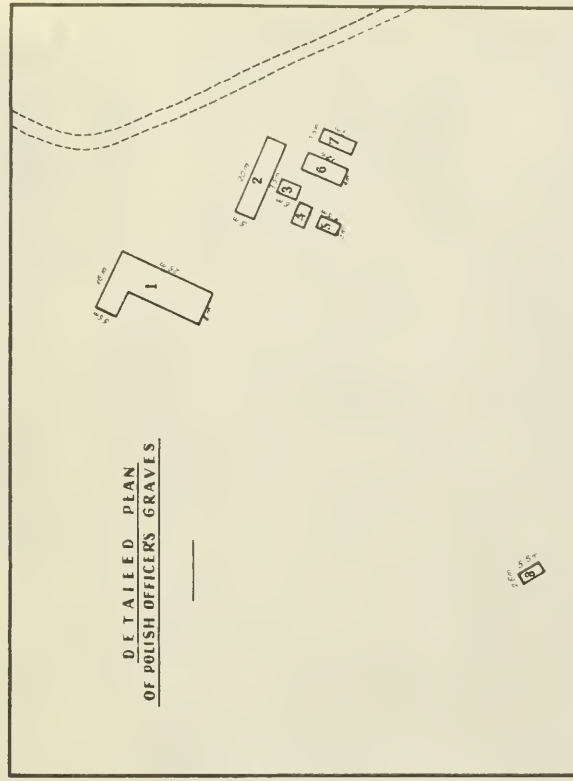
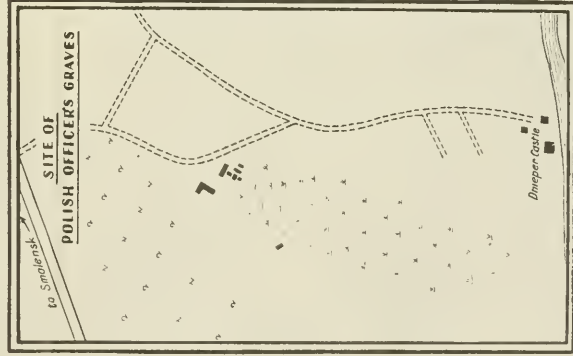
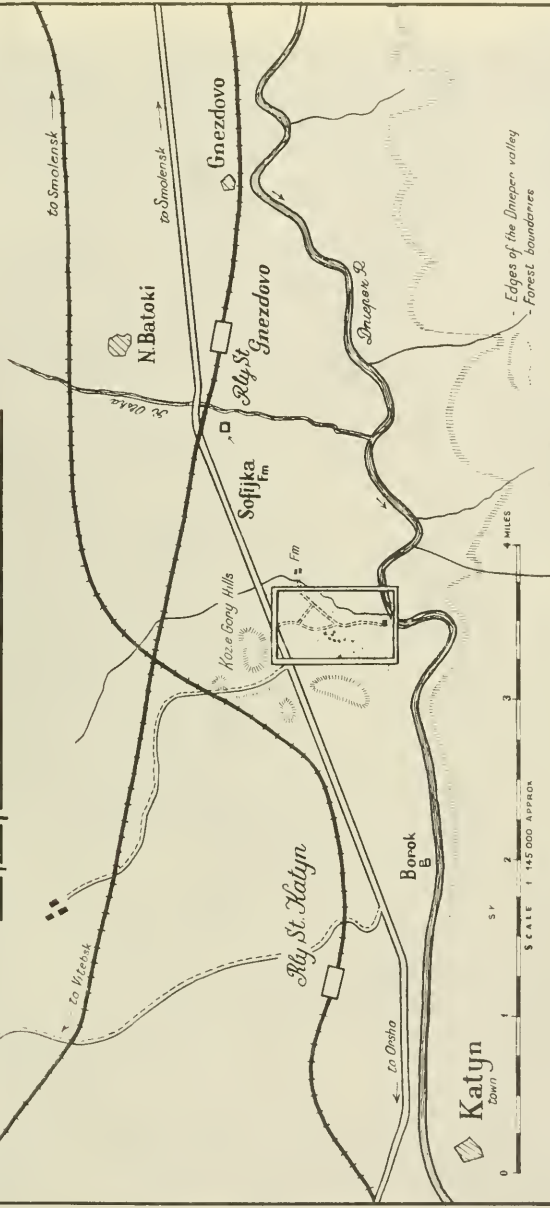
Approximately half way down the longest side of the triangle—the Western, crooked side, (formed by the woody lane leading from the main road to the Rest House,) lay the mass graves of Polish officers a few yards from the lane. They were situated in a clearing in the wood some hundred yards from the valley of the Dnieper, which sloped towards a marsh lying to the South-West. Between the uppermost grave and the marsh the ground dropped 4 feet (see Amtliches Material p. 62).

Kathyn—which is the name of a railway station on the Smolensk-Orsha line and of a small town lying on the opposite, left bank of the Dnieper lies a few miles West of the place of execution.

From Smolensk to Katyn the whole valley of the Dnieper and its tributary the Olsha is woody and was apparently commonly known as the Katyn Forest. Different parts of this forest were named Tshorny Bor, (Black Forest), Krasnyj Bor (Red Forest), Kose Gory (Goat Hill), etc.



Map of KATYN - GNEZDOVO Region







18. *State of the excavations at the time when the "discovery" was disclosed.*

From the time when the work began on 29.3.43 until 10.4.43 exploratory excavations were made all over the woody ground between the main road and the "Little Castle". From the report of the Field Police (documents 6 and 12) included in Amtliches Material, it appears that in the course of these excavations altogether eleven mass graves were found, of which Nos. 1-7, in the Western part of the wood, contained the bodies of Polish officers, while Nos. 8-11 in the Eastern triangle, contained the bodies of Russians buried there at least 10 years before.

Some of the Polish graves had by this time already been more thoroughly examined, others only opened. In particular the grave designated as No. 1 by the Germans was dug right out at one end, and was found to contain 12 layers of bodies. It was reckoned that there were 250 bodies in the top layer. The Field Police report therefore concluded that the grave contained at least 3,000 bodies, perhaps more. But since, as the report pointed out, the bodies in grave No. 1 were lying "mostly in disorder", while those in the remaining six graves were "in places tightly packed against one another", there seemed to be grounds for estimating the total number of bodies at "10-12 thousand at least" (see p. 234).

By 10.4.43 100 bodies in all had been recovered from the Polish graves, of which 65 had been identified on the basis of documents found on them. In the case of 39, the exact rank in the Polish Forces had been established, namely 2 Generals, 2 Colonels, 1 Medical Colonel, 4 Lt. Colonels, 7 Majors, 2 Medical Colonels, 6 Captains, 1 Medical Major, 4 1st Lieutenants and 10 2nd Lieutenants. (Amtliches Material p. 32).

With the exception of documents and personal possessions everything found on the bodies was burnt by the German police.

It is most probable that some of the bodies were also recovered from the Russian graves at the same time, as the report of the Field Police speaks of the clothes found on them and refers to the fact that some of them had their hands tied behind them and in some cases the heads were covered with coats filled with sawdust. The report did not attempt to estimate even roughly the number of bodies in the Russian graves. (Amtliches Material p. 21).

Although the excavation of the Polish graves had progressed according to the report of the Field Police published in Amtliches Material, thus far at the time when their existence was disclosed to the world, excursions visiting Katyn were usually shown only the largest grave, (No. 1), which also chiefly figured in the descriptions given in the first days after the revelations. The size of this grave was exaggerated in these descriptions, because although the measurements were

given as being 26 metres in length and 16 metres in breadth as it was in the form of an "L" (see below p. 315) its area was in reality only 252 sq. metres and not 416. The existence of other graves was also mentioned and in exceptional cases others were shown, particularly the second largest, known as No. 2 (for a detailed description of this grave see p. 318 below), but the already established fact that Polish officers were buried in altogether seven mass graves (five of which were comparatively small) was still kept secret. The first mention of the discovery of seven graves at Katyn was made only in the report of the European Medical Commission of 30.4.43.

18. *Speed and method of exhumation at Katyn.*

Just before the arrival at Katyn of the European Medical Commission, the Secretary of the Katyn Field Police, Voss, was sworn in and interrogated as a witness. In his testimony of 26.4.43 he told the story of the "discovery" described above and gave a summary of the evidence of a few witnesses (Amtliches Material p. 16). Describing the excavated graves, Voss pointed out that in one of them, which was "found later and now only partly excavated," all the bodies were tied up. From grave No. 1, in which Voss estimated there were 3,000 bodies, only the top layer had been taken out up to 24.4.43, and a total of 600 bodies had according to him been exhumed by that time. If this last figure is correct, the speed of exhumation must have already been very great at that time, since the report of the Medical Commission gives the number exhumed up to 30.4.43, as 982. This may have been connected with the arrival of a technical team of the Polish Red Cross at Katyn in the second half of April.

In the further course of his testimony of 26.4.43 Voss estimated the number of bodies in the "weiteren gleichgrossen Gräbern" (other equally large graves) situated near grave No. 1 as "round about" 5-6 thousand. Apart from the fact that this description was inaccurate as No. 1 grave was much the largest, Voss, having given the total estimated number of bodies as being about 2-3,000 less than the "10-12 thousand" originally mentioned, characteristically pointed out, that it was doubtful whether all the 8-9,000 bodies could be exhumed in view of the wetness of the ground in the Western part of the clearing.

There was nothing in the Amtliches Material about the speed of subsequent exhumations. But in the first period of the excavations when they were still searching for the graves in the mounds, the actual exhumations were certainly slower than in the later period, when the position of all Polish graves was already known and the mounds had been levelled.

According to Amtliches Material the excavation of the Katyn graves was in progress from 29.3.43 to 3.6.43-68 days in all, of which 10 were holidays. Easter Saturday, March 24th, was the 27th day of work; Friday, April 30th, the 33rd day. From the figures of 600 and 82 given above it appears that in four days of work (omitting the two days holiday at Easter), 382 bodies were recovered, a daily average of approximately 100 bodies.

In the period from 1.5.43 to 3.6.43 (when "excavations were interrupted") there were 30 working days and 5 holidays. As, according to Amtliches Material, the total number of bodies recovered at Katyn was 4,143 bodies, that is 3,061 in that last period of 30 days (4,143 minus 982), the daily average of about 100 bodies remains the same. This figure tallies with a report sent from Katyn by a special correspondent of the Telepress Agency and published in "Goniec Krakowski" ("Cracow Messenger") No. 123 of 28.5.43, in which it was stated that "thanks to their unexemplified self-sacrifice the members of the (Polish Red Cross) team are in a position to examine and identify about 120 bodies daily."

According to Professor Buhtz's report, the bodies were lifted from the grave by Russian civilian workmen under the supervision of professional medical personnel, at first Germans but later—from the second half of April—Poles, namely the Polish Red Cross team. That team, under the direction of the senior assistant of the Institute of Forensic Medicine at Cracow, Dr. Marian Wodzinski, consisted of three officials of that institute and the Institute of Pathological Anatomy at Cracow and 5 members of the Polish Red Cross from Warsaw.

The exhumation of the bodies which were lying in orderly layers did not present much difficulty. But in those graves into which they had been thrown in at random the limbs of the corpses were often pinned down by other bodies. This, owing to the considerable degree of decomposition, meant that great care had to be taken not to damage them during exhumation. Particularly difficult was the exhumation of corpses in the lower layers and at the centre of the graves, where the bodies were stuck together in one mass. The water which had flooded some of the graves was the cause of further difficulties.

Bodies on which post mortem examinations were to be performed after exhumation, were lifted from the grave with special care, the medical personnel themselves often assisting.

After being separated from the mass, each body was lifted from the grave on a stretcher and laid in the clearing. Here each in turn was given an identity number and preliminary identification work, consisting of inspection of clothes, distinctions and any documents found on the body was carried out. The contents of pockets and any decorations, rings, religious medals etc. were at once removed from the bodies and after superficial inspection were put into bags marked with the same number as had been given to the corpse. Afterwards the bodies were subjected to detailed medical examinations and were transferred into fresh communal graves for reburial. Owing to the large number of bodies, post mortems—partial (the head only) or complete—were performed in special cases only, that is on bodies bearing several bullet or bayonet wounds or signs of blows from rifle butts, and on those which were tied up or gagged.

The contents of the pockets and the documents were then submitted to detailed inspection and where necessary to laboratory treatment. The documents were frequently illegible owing to having been soaked in and stuck together by cadaveric fluid, and had therefore to be washed in xylol or chloroform, etc. or treated with ultra red rays etc. (A. M. p. 44).

Amtliches Material does not give very much information concerning the communal graves in which the already examined bodies were reburied after examination. It was only stated that two identified Generals—Bohatyrewicz and Smorawinski—were buried in separate graves and the rest of the bodies, regardless of rank, in the communal area. Professor Buhtz's report states that these fresh communal graves lay to the North-West of the old ones (A. M. p. 42). The report of the Field Police dated 10.6.43 says that the crosses erected on the graves were marked with the numbers 1-6 and that the burial of exhumed bodies took place in the presence of members of the Polish Red Cross. (A. M. p. 34). It is known from information given in "Goniec Krakowski" of 28.5.43 that a member of the Polish Red Cross from Warsaw, Jerzy Wodzinowski, was in charge of the fresh graves, which were dug by Soviet prisoners of war and that the bodies placed in them were marked with consecutive identity numbers with the object of facilitating identification in the event of the bodies being taken to Poland. There is no information as to the exact position of these graves, the number of bodies contained in each grave etc.

19. Description of the seven Katyn graves.

A comparatively accurate description of the seven Katyn graves is found in the report of Professor Buhtz, and references to them are also included in other documents contained in Amtliches Material. On the basis of this information a description of the graves is given below, the German numbering being used. These numbers appear to have been given purely for convenience and they bore relation to the order in which the graves were discovered by the Germans nor to the order in which they were originally dug up.

All seven graves were concentrated in a fairly small clearing in a wood planted with young spruces and sloping towards the South West (see map and sketch attached to p. 308).

Grave No. 1. was the largest.¹ It was in the form of the letter "L", the longer arm being 26 metres in length, and 8 metres in width, the shorter arm being 16 metres in length and 5.5 metres in width. According to Professor Buhtz's calculations, the total area of the grave was to about 252 sq. metres.

This grave was probably discovered first, and in any case was the first to be excavated to the bottom. Its depth at the centre part of the longest side was 3.3 metres (about 11 ft.), but it gradually became shallower towards both ends.

According to Professor Buhtz's report, the layer of earth covering the bodies in the graves was as a rule 1.5 metres (5 feet) thick. As a result the bodies in the centre part of the "L" grave occupied 3.3 metres minus 1.5 metres=1.8 metres. (about 6 ft.) As 12 layers of bodies were found there, it follows that each layer occupied 0.15 metres. This, it should be noted, is a very small space, even if the flattening and compression of the bodies resulting from partial decomposition and

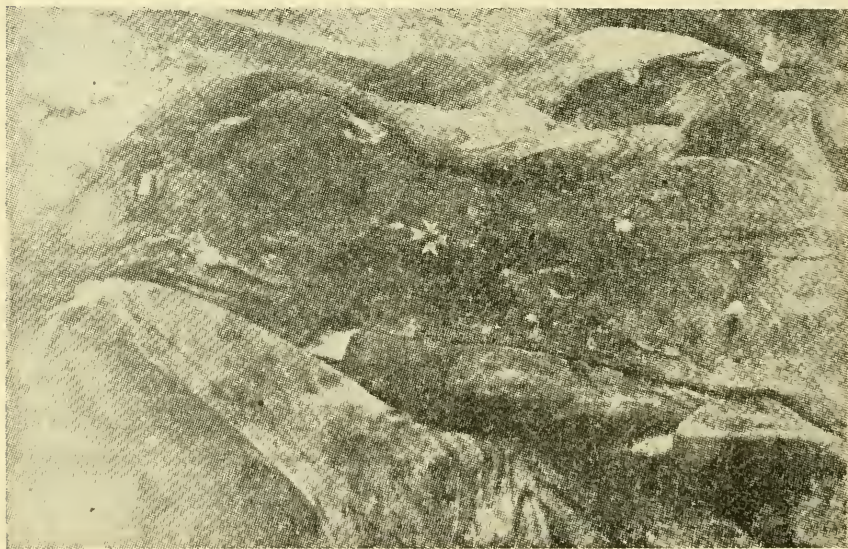
¹ All the measurements in the Amtliches Material are based on the metric system. For the sake of accuracy the calculations on the following pages are also given likewise.

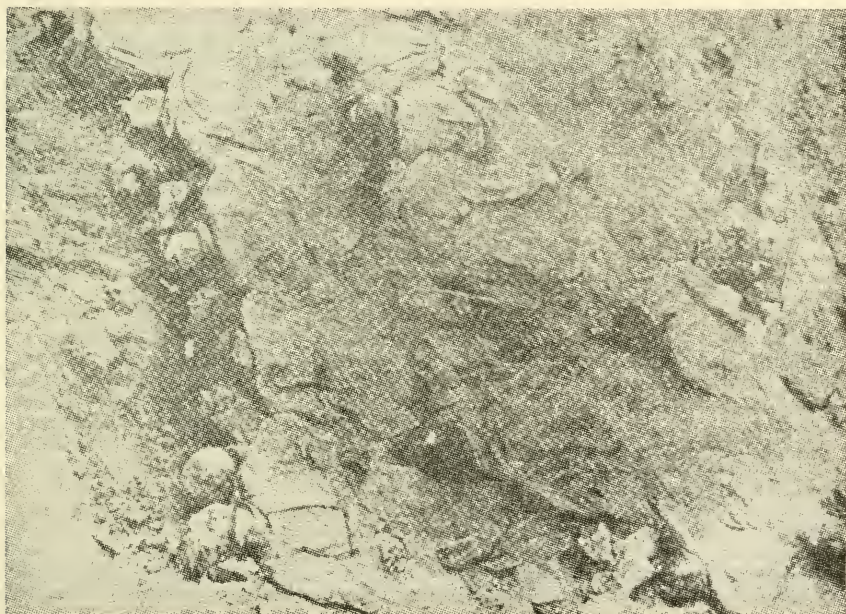
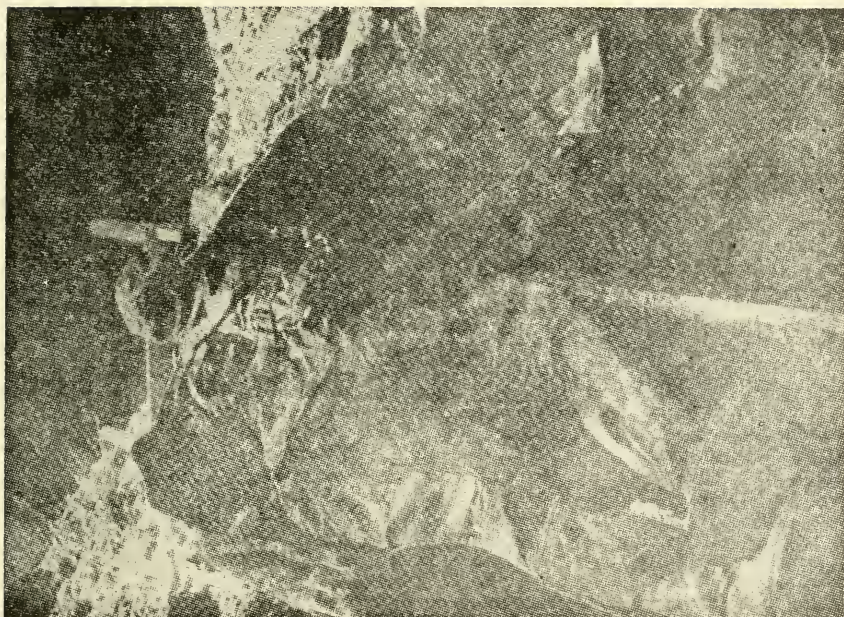
For the readers' convenience, here is a short table of comparative measurements:—

1 metre (m)—3 feet 3¼ inches.
 1 decimetre (10th of a metre)—3.94 inches.
 1 kilometre (1000 metres)—1093.6 yds.
 1 sq. metre—1.2 sq. yd.
 1 cubic metre—1.31 cubic yds. or 35 cubic ft. 547 cubic ins.

from the weight of five feet (1.5 metres) of earth is taken into consideration. In the shallower parts of this grave there were fewer layers of bodies. Thus in the North-Western part there were only 7-9 layers, whose total depth amounted to 0.7 metres (about 2 ft. 4 ins); it follows, therefore, that each layer occupied less than 0.1 metre. (about 4 inches). This shows that the bodies were exceptionally strongly compressed and flattened. (See photograph opposite).

The fact that there were fewer layers of bodies in the shallower parts of the "L" grave explained why its contents, at first estimated at 3,000 bodies, fell to 8,500 in the Medical Commission's report of 30.4.43.





The top layer of grave No. 1 was said to contain "about 250 bodies"; as the area of this grave was about 252 sq. metres, this gives to each body one sq. metre (1.2 sq. yds.) of the area of the grave. If this number is multiplied by 12 layers, we get a total of 3,000. But in the shallower parts of the grave the number of layers was less, descending to 7 and the further question arises, whether all layers of the grave contained equal numbers of bodies. The first reports from Katyn stated the bodies were packed in the graves "like sardines" (see p. 238 and 241 above). No such description is given in Amtliches Material; on the contrary this document definitely mentions that the bodies in the graves were not always arranged in an orderly way and also that they were more closely packed near the edges of the graves, less so in the centre.

As regards grave No. 1, Professor Buhtz's report says that in the Northern part of it the bodies were packed tightly together, even compressed, and that in the centre the heads in each layer were lying on the legs of the layer below, while in the South-Western part the number of layers of bodies became less in proportion to the decrease in the depth of the grave on the falling ground. (See A. M. p. 48).

The description included in the reports of the Field Police differs slightly from that in Professor Buhtz's report. In the report of 10.4.43 it is said that the bodies in grave No. 1 "are for the most part lying in disorder" (A. M. p. 32), the report of 10.6.43 uses the phrase "... in ... Massengräbern geworfen und verscharrt (... thrown into ... mass graves and buried) and "... die Leichen ... wahllos hineingeworfen wurden. Sie lagen völlig ineinandern verfilzt, nur in den Gräbern I, II and IV waren sie *zum Teil* nebeneinander—und auch übereinandergepackt" ("... the bodies ... were thrown in at random. They were all mixed up with each other, only in graves I, II, and IV were they in *partly* packed together and also on top of each other"). (Amtliches Material p. 35).

It is apparent, therefore, that not all layers of bodies in grave 1 were in such good order as the top layer; which would reduce still further the total number of the bodies found in it.

Amtliches Material does not mention how many bodies were recovered from each grave, and it is comparatively seldom mentioned (mainly in the report of Professor Buhtz), which bodies were taken from which grave. From an analysis on the numbers allocated to bodies recovered—according to Amtliches Material—from grave No. 1, it appears that those given the numbers 2,743–3,939 were taken from that grave, which gives a total of about 1,200 bodies. Adding to this number the 250 bodies recovered from the top layer during the first period of work (before 24.4.43) and a few dozen others taken during the same period from the lower layers in the course of digging to the bottom of the deepest parts of the grave (see p. 316 above), the number of 1,500 bodies is arrived at. But taking into consideration that the numbers of the bodies referred to in Amtliches Material do not necessarily represent all the numbers allocated to bodies recovered from the "L" grave, and in view of the compression of bodies described in Professor Buhtz's report, it is possible to put the probable contents at 2,250 bodies.

From other references to grave No. 1 in Amtliches Material it is learnt that about 5% of the bodies found in it had their arms tied behind them and that the grave was probably sprinkled with calcium and chloride (Brannt und Chlorkalk, Amtliches Material p. 52 and 53).

Grave No. 2 was the second largest. It lies about 18 yds. to the South-East of grave No. 1 and measured 20 metres by 5 metres = 100 sq. metres. (120 sq. yds.). Amtliches Material does not give its depth. Professor Buhtz's report states that in the North-Western parts of grave No. 2 the bodies were lying in very good order, face downwards and lengthways, but in the centre crosswise, and that there were in some places as many as 12 layers. From the structure of this grave Professor Buhtz concluded that it was dug and filled in three successive phases "... offenbar dem laufenden Bedürfnis entsprechend"—"... clearly according to current needs" (Amtliches Material p. 40).

Taking Professor Buhtz's already mentioned average of one body to every 1 sq. metre (1.2 sq. yds.) the total contents on an average of 10 layers may be estimated at about 1,000. But if depth of the grave No. 2 was 2.3 metres, (about 7½ ft.) which was given by Professor Buhtz, as average depth of all the graves (Amtliches Material p. 49), then the average space taken up by the bodies was barely 0.8 metres (3¾ ins.) which, even reckoning on 0.1 metres (3.94 ins.) to a layer, would only allow for 8 layers at the most, giving a maximum of 800 bodies.

From the numbers quoted in Amtliches Material in respect of bodies taken from grave No. 2, it appears that those bodies were numbered 2,399 to 2,556. But this does not mean that the 157 bodies with those numbers were the only ones taken from this grave. Taking into consideration the above calculation

of the contents of the grave and the probability that a certain number of bodies recovered from it in the first period of work were given lower numbers, it may be assumed that grave No. 2 contained a maximum of 900 bodies.

According to Professor Buhtz the number of bodies with hands tied behind the back in grave No. 2 was negligible.

Grave No. 3 was situated to the South-West of grave No. 2, measuring 6 metres (about 6 yds. 2 ft.) in length and 3.5 metres (about 3 yds. 3 ft.) in width. *Amtliches Material* does not give its depth.

Taking an average depth of 2.3 metres (about 7½ ft.) and allowing 1.5 metres (5 ft.) for the top layer of earth, the cubic area of the grave would be 16.8 cubic metres (6 by 3.5 by 0.8). An average of one body to 1 sq. metre and 0.1 metre to each layer of bodies, gives the contents of the grave as 168 bodies.

Amtliches Material does not state how many bodies were recovered from grave No. 3, nor does it mention a single identity number relating to those bodies. In all probability the number of bodies found there did not exceed 200. According to Professor Buhtz's report none of them had hands tied.

Grave No. 4 lay on the South-Western side of grave No. 3 and had the same measurements as the latter. All bodies found in it were bound and were lying in confusion. (*Amtliches Material* p. 47). It is therefore probable that the group buried there strongly resisted the death awaiting them. (See above the report of French boys. p. 293.)

In view of the fact that the bodies were lying in disorder, the number in grave No. 4 must have been less than that in grave No. 3 and it therefore probably contained approximately 150–170 bodies.

Grave No. 5 also lay on the South-Western side of grave No. 3, but as the ground fell in that direction this grave was the lowest and nearest to the marshy ground. After the grave had been opened therefore, water flowed into it more quickly, rising to 0.8 metres (3½ ins.) from the top. In Professor Buhtz's opinion, at the time when the grave was filled with bodies the level of subsoil water must have been lower. It may be concluded, therefore, that grave No. 5 was originally dug at a period when surface water was low (in the early Spring) and that the Germans excavated it at Spring, when subsoil water was at a higher level.

Grave No. 5 was the smallest, measuring 4.5 metres by 3 metres=13.5 sq. metres (16.2 sq. yds.). *Amtliches Material* does not give its depth. Professor Buhtz states (*Amtliches Material* p. 47) that this grave contained only three layers of bodies, considerably less than the other graves. Only a few bodies had their arms tied. *Amtliches Material* only mentions the identity number of one body recovered from grave No. 5, i. e. No. 2338 (p. 73).

If Professor Buhtz's average data and his special remarks about grave No. 5 are accepted, the number of bodies in this grave would have been 14 by 3=42, (50–60 at the most).

Graves Nos. 6 and 7 lay to the South-East of grave No. 4 and ran with the falling ground from North-East to South-West.

Grave No. 6 measured 12 metres by 4 metres=48 sq. metres (57.6 sq. yds.). This was the shallowest of the Katyn graves; Professor Buhtz gave its depth in the North Eastern part as 2.1 metres and in the South-Western part 1.74 metres. (*Amtliches Material* p. 40).

In this grave, as in grave No. 4, all bodies had their arms bound. *Amtliches Material* mentions the number of only one body from grave No. 6, i. e. No. 2094. Taking Professor Buhtz's average data (1 body to 1 sq. metre and the depth of one layer of bodies as 0.1 metre), it could have contained a maximum of 6 layers of 48 bodies each, that is about 290 bodies.

Grave No. 7 measured 9 metres by 3.5 metres=31.5 sq. metres (37.8 sq. yds.). (*Amtliches Material* on p. 39 gives its area as 22.5 sq. metres, which is obviously a numerical error). *Amtliches Material* does not give the depth of grave No. 7.

According to Professor Buhtz's report, on the North-Eastern side of grave No. 7 the bodies were "quergeschichtet im Bauchlage gestapelt" ("lying cross-ways face downwards on top of each other") while on the South-Western side they were "planles durcheinander geworfen und in diesem Zustand verscharrt "worden waren".—"Thrown in at random one after the other and "buried in this state." (*Amtliches Material* p. 48).

Taking again the average depth of the graves (2.3 metres) and other average data supplied by Professor Buhtz (1 sq. metre to each body, depth of layers 0.1 metre) the maximum number of bodies contained in this grave would be 288.

As Professor Buhtz stated in his report, the bodies in all seven graves were mostly dressed in Polish uniforms, with winter coats, sheepskins, sweaters and

scarves. The majority of letters and newspapers (Russian and Soviet-Polish) were dated before the middle of April, 1940. Belts, suits and underlinen properly buckled and buttoned, corresponded to the measurement of the bodies and in many cases were marked with a personal monogram. With a few exceptions (where wounds had been for instance inflicted by a bayonet point) they did not show any traces of fighting. Professor Buhtz was convinced that the bodies had not been moved in the graves and that they were in the clothes they were wearing at the moment of death. The suggestions put forward "von Feindseite" (by the enemy) that they had been put into the uniforms of Polish officers be considered as being technically impossible (Amtliches Material p. 43). In the further course of his report Professor Buhtz once again stated that the bodies bore no traces of insects, that watches and rings had been removed (or were found only in exceptional cases, well hidden—such as, for example, a valuable emerald ring), but that gold teeth and religious medals were found on the bodies, as well as golden crosses and sometimes chains, often small sums of Polish and Soviet money and sometimes foreign currency, purses, cigarette cases and holders bearing the inscription "Kozielsk" and dated 1939 or 1940, personal documents, notes, photographs etc.

20. How many bodies were contained in the seven Katyn graves?

The numerical data given in Amtliches Material is quoted here in an attempt to establish the real number of bodies at Katyn.

A. Estimated figures.—These figures were contained in the testimony submitted by the Secretary of the Field Police, Voss, on 26.4.43.

At that time only the top layer of grave No. 1, containing 250 bodies, had been opened and it was stated (probably on the basis of excavations made on one side of the centre part of the grave), that it contained 12 layers of bodies. Otherwise it was simply stated that other graves existed, without giving their exact measurements.

In these circumstances Voss estimated the contents of grave No. 1 at 3,000 and the contents of the other graves very freely at 5,000–6,000 making a total of 8,000–9,000 victims, instead of the figure originally given by the Germans 10–12,000.

B. Maximum Figures.—The European Medical Commission's protocol of 30.4.43 (see p. 284 above) may be taken here as a basis for establishing the maximum figures. On the one hand it may be taken for granted that the Commission did not estimate the contents of the graves too low, since their figures were accepted by the German authorities, while on the other hand it was more cautious in its estimate than Voss. For while Voss calculated the number of bodies in grave No. 1 as 3,000, the protocol of the Medical Commission estimated the number of bodies in that grave at 2,500. As the area of the grave amounted to 252 sq. metres, it appears that the Medical Commission accepted the general average of 10 bodies to an area of 1 metre (about 1.2 yds) of grave.

It should be pointed out that this is in fact the highest figure that can be taken as an average since:

1. grave No. 1, was, at least in some parts, the deepest of all the Katyn graves.
2. in parts of that grave the bodies were particularly tightly compressed and put in in an orderly way, while in other graves they were often much less tightly packed and in greater confusion.

If, despite these reservations, the average figures accepted by the European Medical Commission are applied to all the graves the following table is obtained:

No. of grave.	Area of grave in sq. metres.	Maximum number of bodies.
1.....	252	2,500
2.....	100	1,000
3.....	21	210
4.....	21	210
5.....	13.5	135
6.....	45	450
7.....	31.5	315
Total.....	487	4,850

4,850 would therefore be the *maximum* number of bodies which could be contained in the seven Katyn graves.

C. Probable figures.—An attempt will now be made to establish the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves.

For this purpose the following corrections must be made in respect of the above statements:

1. as the layers of bodies in grave No. 1 amounted to 12 only in the deepest parts and decreased to 7 in shallower parts, a conservative estimate of the average number of layers of bodies should be taken as 9, not 10 as was done by the Medical Commission;

2. a further correction must be made in respect of grave No. 4 where the bodies were in great disorder, and the number of them accordingly less;

3. for grave No. 5 an average of 9 layers of bodies cannot be accepted, as in the description of that grave in Professor Buhtz's report it was distinctly stated that the number of layers of bodies was exceptionally low there—let us therefore accept for that grave the higher number given below in the detailed description, namely 60.

4. finally, in calculating the contents of grave No. 6 it must be taken into consideration that this was the shallowest grave, its depth varying between 2.10 metres and 1.74 metres, which gives an average depth of 1.92 metres, that is about 1/3 less than the depth of grave No. 1, (3.3 metres). Consequently the average number of layers of bodies should be decreased by 1/3 for grave No. 6., which gives us 6 layers.

Bearing these corrections in mind, the following table is obtained:

No. of grave.	Area of grave in sq. metres.	Number of layers of bodies.	Probable number of bodies in grave.
1.....	252	9	2,268
2.....	100	9	900
3.....	21	9	189
4.....	21	-----	160
5.....	13.5	-----	60
6.....	48	6	288
7.....	31.5	9	284
Total.....	487 sq. metres.	-----	4,149

Hence the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves amounted to 4,149.

The estimated number of bodies in the Katyn graves can also be calculated in another way still using the data found in the Amtliches Material as a basis.

The total area of the seven Katyn graves amounted to 487 sq. metres.

The average depth of the graves was 2.3 metres, of which 1.5 metres must be allowed for the layers of earth covering the bodies; the part of the grave filled with bodies would thus be only 0.8 metres in depth.

The total space filled with bodies in the seven Katyn graves would therefore be 487 by 0.8 = 389.6 cubic metres.

The question now arises, how many bodies could be contained in that space?

In the most compressed part of grave No. 1 the thickness of one layer of bodies was 0.07—0.09 metres, but Amtliches Material (p. 48) emphasises that this is exceptional. If, therefore, 0.1 metre, is taken as the average thickness of one layer of bodies, that would not be excessive average.

As was stated above (see p. 316) the top layer of grave No. 1, which was arranged in a particularly orderly manner, contained about 250 bodies, and as the area of that grave was 252 sq. metres it follows that each body occupied 1 sq. metre.

The average space occupied by one body would therefore equal: 1×0.1 metres = 0.1 cubic metres.

Dividing the total area occupied by all the bodies, by the average space occupied by one body, the probable number of bodies in the seven Katyn graves is arrived at: $389.6 \text{ cubic metres} \div 0.1 \text{ cubic metres} = 3,896$.

This number is comparatively near to 4,149, the figure previously arrived at by the other method of calculation.

It should be stressed that both calculations, giving the probable number of bodies in the seven graves as about 4,000, were based on data derived from Amtliches Material. And as this same source states that 4,143 bodies had been re-

covered from the graves and partly identified by 3.6.43,¹ the implication is that the work of excavating the seven Katyn graves was *not interrupted* on June 3rd, 1943, owing to the summer heat and threatening plague of flies, but was already completed. All seven graves had been entirely emptied of bodies and probably filled in. The Germans hid this fact from the world because it stood in glaring contradiction to the widely proclaimed original statement of German propaganda that the Katyn graves contained at least 10-12 thousand bodies.

The following facts and circumstances confirm this thesis:

1) In the days immediately after their arrival at Katyn, i. e. 10-12th April, 1943, the Polish "delegation" had already gained the impression that the German statement that there were 12,000 Katyn victims was a gross exaggeration. This information was immediately communicated by the Polish Underground Movement to the Polish Government in London (see p. 229 and 244).

2) The figure originally widely proclaimed by the Germans of "at least 10,000-12,000 victims" is only found once in Amtliches Material and this in an anonymous introduction to the documents obviously written with a view to propaganda. (A. M. p. 10).

3) Testifying on oath on 26.4.43, the Secretary of the Secret Field Police, Voss, already estimated the contents of the Katyn graves as low as 8,000-9,000, cautiously adding that he feared that for technical reasons (the marshes) it would not be possible to exhume all those bodies (see p. 311 above).

4) "Telepress Agency" correspondent reported in "Goniec Krakowski" of 28.5.43 that the two first graves, which, it will be remembered, were the largest ones, had been by that time completely emptied of bodies and subsequently filled up.

5) As the work of exhumation progressed, it became increasingly clear that the number of bodies exhumed from the Katyn graves would barely exceed 4,000. The Germans, therefore, fearing that their propaganda would be "compromised", had to look for some means of saving themselves. Amongst other things they again searched the Katyn wood in the hope of finding more Polish graves. This probably explains the sudden discovery of an eighth grave containing bodies of Polish officers on 1.6.43 (see below). Apparently, however, the small number of bodies in this new grave did not really "save" the situation, with the result that the Germans decided on a sudden "interruption" of exhumation work on 3.6.43, having in the discovery of a "new grave" an argument in support of their original propaganda thesis concerning the number of Katyn victims.

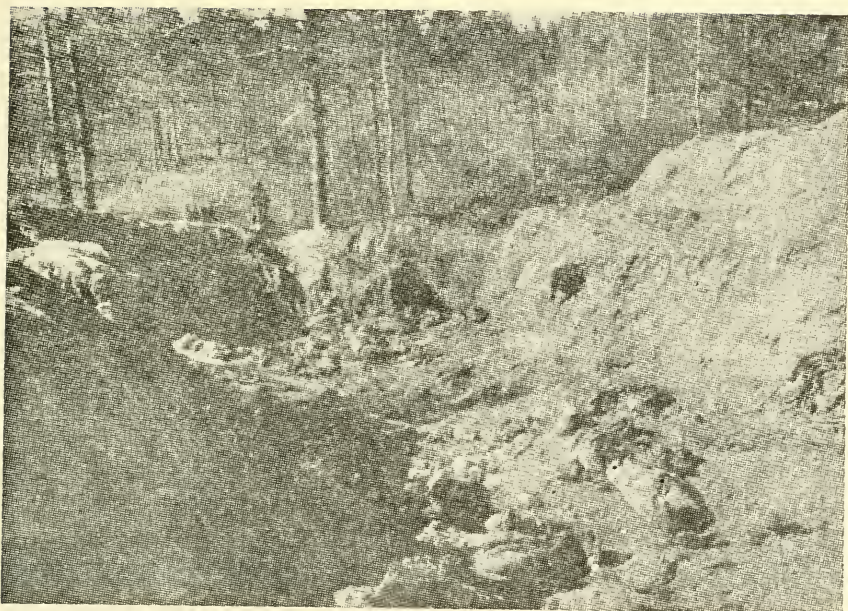
6) It is characteristic that while Professor Buhtz's statement gives 3.6.43 as the date of the "interruption" of exhumation work (A. M. p. 40) the introduction to Amtliches Material altered the date of "interruption" of work at Katyn to July: "Bis im Juli die Sommerhitze eine Unterbrechung der Ausgrabungsarbeiten notwendig machte, konnten 4,143 Opfer geborgen und bestattet werden"—"Until July, when the Summer heat necessitated the interruption of exhumation work, it had been possible to recover and bury 4,143 victims." (A. M. p. 10).

It was probably realised that to make the heat at the beginning of June the reason for interrupting work was not very convincing. It should, however, be pointed out that even in July the "heat" referred to in the Introduction is rather rare in the region of Smolensk. The Short Soviet Encyclopaedia (published in 1941, vol. IX p. 806) gives the average temperature for July as 17.6° C (about 63° F).

¹ From among 4,143 exhumed bodies 67.9% were personally identified reckoning on the basis of the ranks in the Polish Forces. There were among the Katyn victims:

Major-Generals.....	2
Colonels.....	12
Lt. Colonels.....	50
Majors.....	165
Captains.....	440
1st Lieutenants.....	542
2nd Lieutenants.....	930
Paymasters.....	2
Warrant officers.....	8
N. C. Os.....	2
Identified only as officers.....	101
Identified only as servicemen.....	1,440
Doctors.....	146
Veterinary surgeons.....	10
Priest.....	1
Civilians.....	221
Identified only by names.....	21
Unidentified.....	50

(From Final Report of Field Police of 10.6.43 A. M. page 33-34).



21. *The eighth Katyn grave.*

Professor Buhtz wrote rather generally of the discovery of the eighth Katyn grave, simply stating that experimental excavations had established the existence of large numbers of Russian graves in the Eastern part of the wood and in the region of grave No. 8.

On the basis of previous calculations as to the probable numbers of bodies in the Katyn graves, it may be assumed that when the German authorities realised that the number of bodies in the seven Polish graves was much less than 10,000-12,000, the figures originally given by German propaganda, they started to look for new graves. In the course of this search many Russian graves were found and finally one more Polish grave was discovered on 1.6.43.

The eighth Katyn grave was found about 100 yds. South-West of the first seven graves, on the other side of the marsh. (A. M. p. 40.) It must have been fairly deep, since it was said that the first body was found at a depth of 2 metres (about 7 ft.) Although for various reasons this grave seemed to be of great interest, the Germans said that they had confined themselves to opening only part of it (5.5 x 2.5 metres) and stated that trial excavations showed that it stretched further (the report does not say how far) from North-West to South-East.

Professor Buhtz's report does not even estimate the number of victims contained in the newly discovered grave. It only mentions that the bodies were lying in disorder (A. M. p. 48) and that the 13 bodies of Polish officers recovered from it, partly identified and then reburied in the same grave, were dressed differently to those in other graves in that they were wearing Summer instead of Winter uniforms. The bodies of two officers only were in coats and the rest in tunics, without warm underclothes, sweaters or scarves. Documents found on the bodies were also said to relate to a later period than those found in previous graves.

While the latest date of documents found in previous graves was said to be about the middle of April, 1940, in grave No. 8, were found amongst other things, issues of the Kiev "Głos Radziecki" ("Voice of the Soviet"), dated 26th and 28th April, 1940, containing slogans for the 1st May festival and Russian newspapers, the Smolensk "Rabotchy Put" ("Way of the Workers") dated 1st and 6th May, 1940.

It should be stressed that in the paragraph which concerns the eighth grave the German report does not sound convincing. How can one reconcile the dimensions of the grave (5.5 x 2.5 metres) with the statement that the "grave stretches further"? In our opinion this last statement was made, in the same way as the communiqué announcing the "interruption" of the exhumation (see p. 329), in order to uphold German propaganda which was working on the figure of 11,000 Katyn victims. This supposition is further borne out by the following arguments:

If we accept the dimensions of the 8th grave as given in A. M. and the average figures on the basis of which we calculated the probable number of bodies in the seven graves (see pp. 324-6) we can calculate the probable number of bodies in the 8th grave.

If we use the first method (see p. 325-6) we obtain: $(5.5 \times 2.5) = 13.75$ sq. metres. $\times 9 = 123.75$ i. e. approximately 124 bodies.

In applying the second method (see page 326) we obtain $(5.5 \text{ metres} \times 2.5 \text{ metres}) = 13.75$ sq. metres. $\times 0.8 = 11$ cubic metres: $0.1 = 110$ bodies.

Therefore we obtain as the probable contents of the grave the figure 124, or, respectively, 110 bodies.

Since it is emphasized in professor Buhtz's report that in the 8th grave the bodies were not arranged in an orderly fashion, and, therefore, they occupied more room, it appears that the latter figure, i. e. 110 bodies is the more likely.

It should be borne in mind that this figure corresponds almost exactly with the number of officers deported from Kozielsk in two transports, on the 10th and 11th May (see p. 48 and 49)—a fact which leads us to suppose that these two transports departed from Kozielsk separately, with an interval of ten days, lie in a separate grave No. 8.

This supposition is confirmed by the fact, mentioned above, that, in this grave newspapers dated 1st and 6th May were found and also by the fact that the bodies in this grave were not wearing winter clothing (see p. 330). It is known from statements of prisoners who left on the 12th of May by the last transport for Pavlishchev Bor, that the weather suddenly grew warmer during the first days of May and that on the 12th May "the sun was scorching". (See page 72).

Moreover, assuming grave No. 8. to have contained approximately 110 bodies, we find all the "missing" prisoners from the Kozielsk Camp.

It should be remembered that at the moment when its liquidation was started, the camp numbered approximately 4,500 prisoners. Out of this number two

transports totalling 245 people were deported to Pavlishtchev Bor and subsequently to Griašovitz, where they were found. Approximately 2,250 prisoners were missing. (See diagram, page 136). If to the total of 4,143 bodies in the seven Katyn graves we add the figure established for grave No. 8. i. e. 110 bodies, we obtain the figure $4,143 + 110 = 4,253$ bodies.

22. Other data from Professor Buhtz's report.

The section of Professor Buhtz's report devoted to the medico-legal aspects of the Katyn murders was a considerable elaboration and enlargement of the report of the European Medical Commission. Without giving all the medico-legal deductions, a summary of some of the most interesting facts connected with the Katyn murders will be given here.

A. How long were the bodies buried? Date of the murder.—Judging by the state of advance in the formation of adipocere on the Katyn bodies (A. M. p. 48 and foll.), and the results of examination of the cerebral matter by Professor Orsós's method (see p. 290 above), Professor Buhtz came to the conclusion that “. . . pure scientific deductions ‘show that the bodies had been lying in the graves . . . at least three years’”. (A. M. p. 59).

But as examination of the changes which had taken place in the bodies did not make it possible to establish precisely the date of death, it was necessary to search for supplementary evidence to fix the time of the murder more accurately. In this respect the most concrete and convincing data were supplied, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, by written documents and newspapers found on the bodies, indicating that the murder took place in the spring of 1940.

Attempts to establish the length of time the bodies had been buried on the basis of the degree and the manner of corrosion (“aus dem Grad und der Art der Korrosionen”) of metal objects found on them did not, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, give very reliable or convincing results. In his report he gave the example of two aluminium objects (a flash and an identity disk) found on the same bodies and showing entirely different marks of corrosion, probably due to the effect of the immediate surroundings.

In this respect the spruces planted on the graves, in the opinion of Professor Buhtz, provided far more reliable supplementary evidence. As microscopic examination of cross-sections of the trunks of the trees showed equal growth in the three annual rings, while between these and the heart of the tree (Kern) a dark border line (dunkle Abgrenzungs Linie), he drew the conclusion that the trees had been transplanted three years before (i. e. in 1940). As the Russian graves discovered at Katyn were also planted with young trees of the same age as the graves themselves, in Professor Buhtz's opinion, the method of planting the Polish officers' graves proved the time as well as the perpetrators of the crime (see reference 1 on p. 288).

B. Circumstances of the murder.—In all cases the cause of death, established by post mortem examinations of the bodies, was a shot in the back of the head. The shot was fired—as was described in detail by Professor Buhtz (A. M. p. 76)—at very close range or even with the pistol pressed to the head of the victim. In many cases the shot was fired through the raised collar of the greatcoat or through the tunic or coat tied round the head of the victim. Only in a few cases, owing to the decomposition of the body after death, the bullet hole was not at first visible during post mortem examination. Normally it was situated at the base of occipital bone (A. M. p. 56). As the hole where the bullet had emerged was normally in the victims forehead, between the top of the nose and the edge of the scalp, the bullet must have passed through the most vital part of the brain. (A. M. p. 57), causing instantaneous death.

On the basis of an analysis of the wounds, the bullets found in a few skulls and of the cartridge cases lying near the graves, Professor Buhtz stated that as a rule 7.65 calibre and in rare cases 6.35 calibre pistols had been used. (A. M. p. 73).

The ammunition was of German origin, from the factory of “Gustav Genschow & Co. in Durlach bei Karlsruhe” (Baden), and bore the trade mark “Geco”. Among the bodies in grave No. 2 was found one undischarged cartridge of the same make, an examination which made it possible to state that the ammunition was produced in the years 1922–31. As German “Geco” 7.65 pistol ammunition was exported in large quantities from Germany to countries including Poland, the Baltic States and—in very large quantities up to 1928 and thereafter in smaller quantities—the U. S. S. R., Professor Buhtz was not surprised to find them in the bodies of the Katyn victims. But he left open the question of whether the ammunition was part of that exported from Germany direct to the U. S. S. R. or whether it came from stores seized by the Soviet authorities when they occupied the Eastern territories of Poland (A. M. p. 75).

In certain cases there were two bullet holes close to each other in the victim's skull; in two cases three (or even four) shots had been fired (the record of post mortem examination of body No. 833, A. M. p. 94 and foll.); in one case there was a shot wound on the temple as well as in the back of the head. (A. M. p. 57).

From this it may be concluded that many people took part in the execution and were standing directly behind the backs of their victims. In certain cases they fired twice into the same head. The uniform localisation of thousands of shots in a small area of the occipital bone bore witness to the great skill of the murderers. (A. M. p. 85).

In the opinion of Professor Buhtz, the execution took place near or at the edge of the graves. He rejected, after close analysis, the suggestion that the Polish officers were murdered right inside the pits, either standing or lying on the bodies of previous groups.

In Professor Buhtz's opinion the shots were fired exclusively from ordinary pistols—not, as some people thought, from automatic rifles or even machine-guns—into the heads of the victims, who were in a normal standing position (not kneeling for execution) and probably not expecting death, or were held by both arms at the moment of death. This conclusion obviously relates only to those whose bodies were not found tied up.

A certain number of bodies (all in graves Nos. 4 and 6, about 5% in grave No. 1, and none in graves Nos. 3, 7 and 8) had their hands tied behind them in a most effective manner with strong, uncoloured cord, 3–4 mm. (1½ ins.–1¾ ins) thick, which was apparently previously prepared for this purpose and was similar to that manufactured for curtains. The hands were tied in such a way that any attempt to free them would have caused the knot to tighten and increased the pain. The uniform method of binding, in which more or less similar lengths of string were used (1.75 metres to 1.95 metres. 2 yds.–2 yds. 6 ins.) showed great proficiency on the part of the executioners. In many instances the victims, besides having their hands bound, also had their heads completely enveloped in their own tunics or greatcoats, in those cases the tunics or greatcoats were tied tightly round the neck and over the head of the victims with the same cord as was used for tying the hands. This cord was connected with the piece tying the arms in such a way that every strong movement of the hands or head would have tightened the knots and increased the pain suffered by the victim. In a few cases the coats bound round the heads were full of sawdust, which had also filled the mouths of the victims. Apparently those who resisted the death awaiting them, mostly young and seemingly energetic people, were bound in this way. Prof. Buhtz concluded that from the medico-legal point of view this method of binding the victims, which to a great extent hindered their breathing constituted a particularly refined form of torture before death. (A. M. p. 90).

Professor Buhtz also considered the bayonet wounds inflicted (by four-edged Russian bayonets) on the victims before death to be a form of torture, and was of the same opinion with regard to the blows of rifle butts or fists which broke, in a very expert manner, the lower jaws of victims who seemingly cried out in the face of death. (A. M. p. 53, 90 and foll).

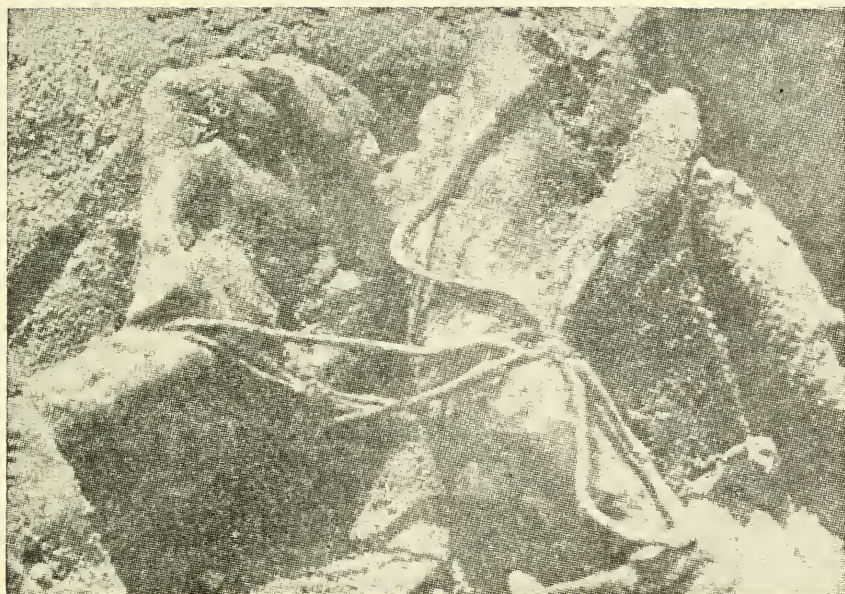
CHAPTER XXI. THE RUSSIAN VERSION—"THE TRUTH ABOUT KATYN"

23. *Moscow Declaration on the punishment of war criminals.*

Very soon after the publication of Amtliches Material, the German Army was driven from the Smolensk region. After unusually heavy fighting the attacks launched by General Sokolowski's Army on Jartsevo and by General Jeremienko's Army on Duchovshitchizna on 15.9.43 lead to the capture of Smolensk by the Soviet armies on 25.9.43. Soon afterwards they also retook the region of the Katyn graves, with the result that the "resumption" of the exhumations which the Germans had declared would take place in the Autumn became impossible.

The publication of the A. M. was therefore the "swan song" of German propaganda about the Katyn affair. For some months the Germans had used it to shock public opinion in Europe and the world but how they allowed it to fade out and by October 1943 almost nothing was heard of it. Neither was it taken up by the Soviets who, having now got possession of the material evidence of the world-famous crime, were probably entirely pre-occupied with the more fundamental problems arising out of the liberation of the vast Soviet territories.

It appears however, that this matter had not been entirely forgotten at that time. Moreover it is quite possible that diplomatic circles were much pre-occupied with it. The fact that the public conscience was deeply impressed by the Katyn affair is shown by a characteristic incident which in November 1943



intrigued world public opinion. In the last fortnight of October 1943 the first of the conferences of the Foreign Ministers of the Allied Powers at this time Cordell Hull, Eden and Molotov—was held in Moscow. A special Declaration giving full warning to the German war criminals and signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin was issued on 1.11.43 together with the communiqué on the results of the conference which was simultaneously published in Moscow, London and Washington. When the text of this Declaration was cabled from Moscow, it was stated that the Allied Powers had proclaimed that all war criminals would be pursued "to the uttermost ends of the earth" and that they would be delivered to "their accusers in order that justice may be done". Among these war criminals were included "Germans who took part in the mass shooting of Polish officers".

About 3 weeks afterwards the British Foreign Office announced (on 19.11.43) that the text published in London contained 2 errors on account of mutilation in transmission, and thus differed from the correct text issued in Moscow. One of these errors was the use of the word "Polish" instead of "Italian" in the sentence referring to the mass shooting of officers (quoted above).

It is quite possible that an official coding or decoding the text of the Declaration, or the telegraphist who dispatched it, was so preoccupied with the mass shooting of Polish officers at Katyn, which had a month before held the attention of the whole world, that he automatically wrote "Polish" instead of "Italian"—nothing having been heard of the mass shooting of Italian officers. But the possibility cannot be excluded that it was really in the interests of the U. S. S. R., representatives to introduce into the official declaration of heads of the government of the three Great Powers a sentence establishing in advance, though not explicitly, the German responsibility for the Katyn murder.

But as the previous Soviet statements on this matter did not contain sufficiently convincing proofs of German guilt, the final official text of the Declaration on war criminals referred neither directly nor indirectly to the murder of Polish officers at Katyn.¹ It stated that war criminals would "be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries . . . thus Germans, who take part in wholesale shootings of Italian officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages, or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in the territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the people whom they have outraged."

The fact that the communiqué issued after the Moscow conference did not refer to the Polish problem did not mean that the question was not discussed there. Since the severing of diplomatic relations with the Polish Government by the Government of the U. S. S. R. in April 1943, Anglo-Saxon diplomacy had made many efforts to settle this problem which was proving extremely embarrassing for the Allies. In January 1944, when the Soviet Army crossed the Polish-Soviet frontier established by the Treaty of Riga, the Polish question flared up once again. Yet another exchange of official declarations of the Polish and Soviet Governments ended with the declaration by the Soviet TASS Agency on 17.1.44 that the Soviet Government could not enter into diplomatic negotiations with a Government with which it had broken off diplomatic relations "because of its active participation in the hostile, anti-Soviet, slanderous campaign of the German invaders in connection with the alleged murders of Katyn."

At the same time it was announced in Moscow that an official Soviet Commission "formed by a decision of the Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Committed by the Germans" had investigated the circumstances of the shooting of Polish officers in the Katyn forest and that its findings would be announced shortly.

As the Katyn affair had been the formal reason for the severing of Polish-Soviet relations, Anglo-Saxon diplomats who were striving to close the breach in the Allied camp, probably found themselves continually confronted with it. It is possible, therefore, that the Soviet Government suddenly became aware of the necessity of being able to produce official and formal proofs that the Katyn murder was perpetrated by the Germans.

A session of the "Special Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officer Prisoners by the German-Fascist

¹ It is essential to note that many Anglo-Saxon writers when referring to the Moscow Declaration overlooked the official correction of the text and that there exist, therefore, published references to punishment of "Germans who took part in the mass shooting of Polish 'officers.'" See, among others, George Creel, *War criminals and Punishment*, Hutchinson, New York and London 1944 and 1945. p. 68.

Invaders in the Katyn Forest" was therefore called in Smolensk and in order that the necessary medical-legal evidence might be obtained, instructions were issued for the re-exhumation of the Katyn victims despite the fact that, as it was the coldest month in the year, the earth was completely frozen and deep in snow.¹

The Report of this Commission, dated 24.1.44, and entitled "The Truth about Katyn"² furnished the necessary proofs. The Soviet version of the Katyn murder based on this report and on additional material supplied by journalists who were present during the session of the Special Commission is given in this Chapter.

24. *The Soviet Special Commission and its work.*

By a Decree of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. dated 2.11.43, an "Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Crimes committed by the German Fascist Invaders and their Associates" was set up. The Extraordinary Commission was composed of:

Chairman:

H. M. Shvernik—well-known Trade Union Leader, President of the Soviet of Nationalities of U. S. S. R., Member of the Polit-bureau of the Communist Party of the U. S. S. R.

Members:

N. N. Burdenko—Academician—Surveyor;

B. R. Wedeneyev—Academician;

W. S. Grysudubova

A. A. Zdanov—III Secretary of the Central Committee and Member of the Politbureau of the Communist Party of the U. S. S. R.;

Nikolai—Metropolitan of Kiev and Halich;

T. D. Lysienko—Academician—Botanist;

E. W. Tarle—Academician—Historian;

A. N. Tolstoy—Academician—Author;

I. P. Trainin—Academician—Jurist.

Article 3 of this Decree authorised the Extraordinary State Commission "to entrust the appropriate organisations with the investigation and interrogation of those who have suffered and with the collection of testimonies and other documents referring to the violations, brutalities, plunder, destruction and other criminal deeds perpetrated by the Hitlerite invaders and their accomplices, and to order the local State organisations to collaborate with the Commission by all possible means". (A "Soviet War News" Pamphlet—Investigation of Nazi Atrocities, Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R.)

In accordance with this article, the Extraordinary State Commission, in a resolution of undisclosed date, set up a "Special Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officer Prisoners by the German Fascist Invaders in the Katyn Wood." (The first mention of this "Special Commission" was made in Moscow on 17.1.44—See above).

The composition of this Special Commission, according to its Report, was as follows:

Chairman:

M. N. Burdenko—surgeon and Academician, Member of the Royal Society and of the American Medical Associations.

Members.

A. N. Tolstoy—Academician—Author;

Nikolai—Metropolitan of Kiev and Halich;

Lt. Gen. Gundurov—President of the All-Slav Committee;

S. Kolesnikov—Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Union of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;

W. Potemkin—Peoples' Commissar of Education of the Russian S. F. S. R., Academician;

Col. Gen. E. Smirnov—Chief of the Central Medical Administration of the Red Army;

B. Mielnikov—Chairman of the Smolensk Regional Executive Committee.

¹ That the calling of this session of the Special Commission of Smolensk was entirely unexpected and sudden, was borne out by Jerzy Borejsza, the special correspondent, of "Wolna Polska" the official organ of the Union of Polish Patriots in Moscow. This reporter having been sent to Smolensk in a great hurry by special car wrote in his article as follows: "Late at night on January 21st, 1944, we received in Moscow news that on the following day the Special Commission for investigating the circumstances of the murder of Polish officers and soldiers in the Katyn wood was to interrogate at Smolensk witnesses of the thousand-fold murders." *Sladami zbrodni* ("On the Tracks of the Crime")—"Wolna Polska" No. 4/45, dated 1.2.44.

² In the following pages we are referring to the English text of the Report published in London as a "Supplement to the Soviet War News Weekly."

It appears from the Report of the Special Commission that a member of the Extraordinary State Commission, N. N. Burdenko, together with his collaborators and medico-legal experts (none of whom are named in the Report), proceeded to Smolensk on 26.9.43, that is on the day following the capture of that city by the Red Army, and for a period of nearly four months "carried out preliminary study and investigation of the circumstances of all the crimes perpetrated by the Germans."

✱ The vast amount of material collected in those four months defined as "study and investigation" in the Report, was then put at the disposal of the Special Commission, operating under the Chairmanship of the same Burdenko.

The Special Commission started work on an undisclosed date, and in order to accomplish the task assigned to it summoned, on a date also not disclosed in the Report, the following medico-legal experts to participate in its work:

W. Prozorovsky—Chief Medico-Legal Expert of the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U. S. S. R., Director of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health in the U. S. S. R.;

Dr. of Medicine W. Smolyaninov—Professor of Forensic Medicine at the Second Moscow Medical Institute;

Dr. Semenovskiy—Senior Staff Scientist at the Thanatology Department of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U. S. S. R.;

Dr. W. Shvaikova—Assistant Professor Senior Staff Scientist of the Chemico-Legal Department of the State Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Medicine under the Peoples' Commissariat of Health Protection of the U. S. S. R.;

Prof. D. Voropayev—Chief Pathologist of the Front, Major in the Medical Service.

According to the Special Commissions Report "it verified and ascertained on the spot that 15 kilometres from Smolensk, along the Vitebsk highway, in the section of the Katyn Forest named 'Kose Gory', 200 metres to the South-West of the highway in the direction of the Dnieper, there are graves in which Polish war prisoners shot by the German occupationists were buried. On the order of the Special Commission, and in the presence of all its members and of the medico-legal experts, the graves were excavated."

All this took place, according to the "Protocol of the Medico-Legal Experts investigation" included in the Report of the Special Commission, on Sunday, 16th January, 1944. During the next week, between Sunday, 16th January and Sunday, 23rd January, 1944, the Commission of Medico-Legal Experts with the aid of the following medical personnel:

Major Nikolsky, of the Medical Service, Chief Medico-Legal Expert of the Western Front;

Captain Bussoyedov, of the Medical Service, Medico-Legal Expert of the X. Army;

Major Subbotin, of the Medical Service, Chief of Pathological Anatomy Laboratory No. 92;

Major Ogloblin, of the Medical Service;

1st Lieut. Pushkareva, of the Medical Service, carried out the exhumation and medico-legal examination of 925 bodies from "a communal grave" measuring, according to the report of the experts, "about $60 \times 60 \times 3$ metres" and also from "another grave about $7 \times 6 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ metres."

From the medico-legal experts' conclusion it appears that these were not original graves only now discovered, but were the so-called communal graves in which the bodies of the Katyn victims had been reburied after their exhumation by the Germans in 1943 as paragraph (c) of the experts conclusion read: "slits in the pockets, pockets turned inside out, and tears in them discovered during examinations of the clothing, show that as a rule all the clothes on each body (greatcoats, trousers, etc.) bear traces of searches effected of the dead bodies."

Confirmation of this fact is found in the following paragraphs of the same conclusion:

1. "After the opening of the graves and exhumation of the bodies and their exposure to the air, the corpses were subject to the action of warmth and moisture in the late summer season of 1943. This could have resulted in a vigorous progress of decay."

2. "The commission of medico-legal experts . . . regards the fact of the discovery by the commission of medico-legal experts, in the clothes on the bodies, of valuables and documents dated 1941, as proof that the German Fascist author-

ities who undertook a search of the bodies in the Spring-Summer season of 1943 did not do it thoroughly”

3. “The Commission of medico-legal experts notes that in 1943 the Germans had made an extremely small number of post mortem examinations of the bodies of the shot Polish war prisoners.”

The fact that there is no accurate description of the fresh communal graves in the German documents (see above) make it impossible to check whether the measurements of $60 \times 60 \times 3$ metres, given in the “Protocol of the medico-legal Experts’ investigation” corresponds to the measurements of all six communal graves dug in the spring of 1943 or only to one of those graves. It may however, be assumed that these measurements are those of the complete new cemetery comprising the 6 communal graves in which the Katyn bodies had been reburied by the Germans—of which only one was re-opened by the Russians.

“Simultaneously with the excavation of the graves and examination of the bodies”, continued the Report of the Commission, “the Special Commission examined numerous witnesses among local residents, whose testimony establishes with precision the time and circumstances of the crime committed by the German occupationists”.

It appears from an analysis of the report that it is based primarily on the testimony of witnesses.

According to Borejsza’s report previously quoted from “Wolna Polska”, the Special Commission began the examination of witnesses on January 22nd or even 23rd 1944, as his report contains the following sentence:

“We now return to the session of the Commission, where Academician Burdenko is just calling the first witness”.

Apparently, however, not all of the over 100 witnesses mentioned in the final general “Conclusions of the Special Commission” were examined during its public sessions as the final report on its work was already drawn by 24.1.44 and as the examination of such a large number of witnesses in 2 or 3 days would have been completely impossible.

Jerzy Borejsza reported that about 20 foreign journalists and observers were present at the public sessions of the Special Commission and inspected the excavated Katyn graves. Among them were:

Miss Harriman, daughter of the United States Ambassador to the U. S. S. R.;

Mr. Al. Worth of London B. B. Co.;

Mr. Cassidy, of the Associated Press Agency;

Mr. Lawrence of the New York Times;

Mr. Duncan-Hooper of Reuters;

Prof. Davies of the Toronto Star;

Correspondents of the United Press, News Chronicle etc.

25. *The Katyn wood and Polish prisoners of war in special camps.*

The Report of the Special Commission opened with the statement that “the Katyn forest had for long been the favourite resort of Smolensk people, where they used to rest on holidays. The population of the neighbourhood grazed cattle and gathered fuel in the Katyn forest. Access to the Katyn Forest was not banned or restricted in any way”.

The Special Commission recalled as a proof of this statement the fact that “even in the summer of 1941 there was a Young Pioneers Camp of the “Industrial Insurance Board in this forest, and it was not liquidated until July 1941.” But the Report said nothing of the site of that Pioneers Camp in the Katyn wood and as it extended over a fairly large area and consisted of different parts, some of them bearing separate names (see p. 308 above), the mere fact of a Pioneers camp having existed in one part of the wood and not having been liquidated “until July, 1941” did not exclude the possibility of other parts having been used for different purposes. The fact that the various parts of the Katyn wood were called by different names was confirmed in the last paragraph of Chapter I of the Report, which said that “the part of the Katyn Forest named Kose Gory was guarded particularly strictly” by the Germans. The Report of the Special Commission definitely failed to mention how far that Pioneers camp lay from the “Rest House of the Smolensk Administration of the Peoples’ Commissariat of Internal Affairs.” (N. K. V. D.)

The Report went on to refer to the Polish prisoners who were alleged to have been in the Smolensk area when it was taken by the Germans in 1941. Except however for a vague reference in the testimony of one of the witnesses (Savatiexev—see below) to the fact that those prisoners were brought to the region of Smolensk in the spring of 1940 and were disembarked at the Gniezdovo station, it confined

itself to stating that "Polish war prisoners, officers and men, worked in the Western district of the Region, building and repairing roads" and that they were "quartered in three special camps named: Camp No. 1. O. N., Camp No. 2. O. N. and Camp No. 3 O. N. These camps were located 25-45 kilometres (about 15½-28 miles) West of Smolensk".

Unfortunately the Report made no mention of such important and essential points as:

1. the general number of Polish prisoners who were supposed to have been in that region in 1941;
2. the number of prisoners in each of the three camps;
3. the Polish military ranks of the prisoners, which should have presented no difficulty to the Soviet authorities in view of the detailed records made in the camps;
4. the actual site of each of those camps, which could have been named after the geographical names of the places in which they were supposed to have been situated instead of being referred to only by numbers.

The report also did not explain why those particular P. O. W. camps for Polish officers and soldiers near Smolensk were called "special" camps, nor did it give any indication of specialized features that might have distinguished them from other "ordinary" P. O. W. camps.

In general there was no answer to be found in the Report to the many questions which naturally arose if, as the Soviets maintained, the Polish P. O. W.'s from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been moved to "special camps" in the Smolensk area:

1. Why, in 1940 and 1941, 97% of Polish officers captured by the Soviets were detained in the special camps Nos. 1 O. N., 2 O. N., and 3 O. N., and engaged in "building and repairing roads", while the remaining 3%, at that time in the camp at Pavlishtchev Bor and subsequently at Griazovietz, were exempt from all forced labour?

2. Why—as appears from an article by Warrant Officer Marian Klimczak entitled "I was a prisoner in the Katyn Forest", published in No. 7/48 of the Moscow "Wolna Polska" of 24.2.44—were the prisoners in camp No. 2 O. N. (in which the author of the article is supposed to have passed "a certain time" in 1941 with "a group of 300 persons" (kept on normal rations for Soviet correctional labour camps which depended on the results of their work, while those in the camps of Pavlishtshev Bor and Griazovietz were receiving full rations regardless of the fact that they did no work?

3. Why did families in Poland receive no news for eighteen months from Polish prisoners of war in special camps Nos. 1 O. N., 2 O. N., and 3 O. N., while they were able to correspond comparatively freely with the prisoners of war at Griazovietz?

4. Why, in camps Nos. 1 O. N., 2 O. N., and 3 O. N., did Generals and staff officers have to work at "building and repairing roads" while in other camps such officers were not only exempt from all work but had batmen and even adjutants assigned to them.

5. Why and for what purpose were even invalids and people with artificial arms and legs transferred from Kozielsk to these "special" camps? And why were prisoners sent to these special camps for building roads without regard to their age or state of health, among them people over 60 years of age, while from the camp for internees at Kozielsk (Kozielsk III) only those pronounced fit for work by the medical commission were sent to labour camps. (See pp. 53-54.)

6. Why, if, in the period from October, 1940, when in the P. O. W. camp of Griazovietz and the camp for internees at Kozielsk the Soviet authorities were taking steps to find people to organise the already planned "Polish Division" or Army (see Ch. VII above) were similar steps not taken in "special camps Nos. 1 O. N., 2 O. N., and 3 O. N." which contained 97% of Polish officer prisoners of war?

7. Why, finally, were such large numbers (over 10,000) of Polish prisoners of war, particularly officers, concentrated for the work of "building and repairing roads" in the Western district of the Smolensk region, when—as is stated in the Short Soviet Encyclopaedia, pub. 1941, vol. IX p. 810—the lines of communication in the region of Smolensk, were as fully developed as in any place in the whole Soviet Union.

26. *Question of the impossibility of evacuating Polish Prisoners of War and their capture by the Germans.*

The Report of the Special Commission went on to explain why Polish prisoners of war from the three "special" camps in the Western areas of the Smolensk region had not been evacuated before the German advance. It stated that: "Testi-

mony of witnesses and documentary evidence establish that after the outbreak of hostilities, in view of the situation that arose, the camps could not be evacuated in time and all the Polish war prisoners, as well as some members of the guard and staff of the camps fell prisoner to the Germans."

The "documentary evidence" mentioned in the foregoing paragraph was neither quoted in the Report of the Special Commission, nor discussed in any detail, so that we know nothing about it. As far as statements of witnesses in this matter are concerned, the Report quoted two of the depositions:

"The former Chief of Camp No. 1 O. N. Major of State Security Vetoshnikov interrogated by the Special Commission testified:

"I was waiting for the order on the removal of the camp, but communication with Smolensk was cut. Then I myself with several staff members went to Smolensk to clarify the situation. In Smolensk I found a tense situation. I applied to the chief of traffic of the Smolensk section of the Western Railway, Ivanov, asking him to provide the camp with railway cars for evacuation of the Polish war prisoners. But Ivanov answered that I could not count on receiving cars. I also tried to get in touch with Moscow, to obtain permission to set out on foot, but I failed. By this time Smolensk was already cut off from the camp by the Germans, and I did not know what happened to the Polish war prisoners and guards who remained in the camp."

"Engineer Ivanov, who in July 1941 was acting Chief of Traffic of the Smolensk Section of the Western Railway, testified before the Special Commission:

"The Administration of the Polish War Prisoners' Camps applied to my office for cars for evacuation of the Poles, but we had none to spare. Besides, we could not send cars to the Gussino line, where the majority of the Polish war prisoners were, since that line was already under fire. Therefore, we could not comply with the request of the Camps Administration. Thus the Polish war prisoners remained in the Smolensk region."

The report did not mention if both these witnesses were interrogated during the public session of the Special Commission. Jerzy Borejsza, special correspondent of the "Wolna Polska" mentioned in his report "On the trail of the crime" only Ivanov's depositions and he quoted from it extremely important and essential factual details, which were entirely omitted in the report of the Special Commission.

"The former stationmaster of Gnezdovo" (the Report of the Special Commission referred to Ivanov as the acting Chief of Traffic of the Smolensk Station). Ivanov, a precise, neat old man, recalled the circumstances of the evacuation of Smolensk. On 12th July 1941 he was asked by the Chief of one of the Polish war prisoner camps to extend to him facilities to evacuate the war prisoners. But the German offensive was so rapid that it was impossible even to evacuate certain factories and some of the workers. "How many waggons were you asked to provide for the prisoners?"—I asked. "I was asked for at least 40 waggons"—replied Ivanov . . ."

This quotation shows, that the Soviet journalist succeeded in recording a very important detail from the testimony of the witness Ivanov—a detail completely ignored in the report of the Special Commission—namely the *date* on which he was supposed to have been approached by the chief of the War Prisoner Camp with the request for waggons.

The synthetic German communiqué of the 7th August 1941 states that "on 11th July we captured Vitebsk.

On the next day flying columns attacked on a far-flung front East of the Orsha-Smolensk road."

This attack cannot have been very successful and could not have advanced very rapidly, since it was not until the 15th of July that the German communiqué stated that "the last fort on the Easternmost point of the Stalin Line in the Vitebsk region has been captured." This is also borne out by Soviet communiqué of the 13th, 14th, and 15th July, which spoke of stubborn fighting "in the direction of" or "in the sector of" Vitebsk and the Soviet communiqué of the 16th July stated that "near Vitebsk enemy attempts to penetrate this region have failed completely."

In the light of the communiqués by both combatants the situation on the 15th July 1941 appeared to have been as follows: stubborn fighting was going on in the region of Vitebsk and Orsha, while pressure of the German forces to the East was—according to the Soviet communiqué of the 16th July—being successfully held or, at least, delayed.

If at the same time we bear in mind the fact that according to the Soviet version the three "special" Polish war prisoner camps were supposed to have been

situated at a distance of 15-28 miles West of Smolensk, i. e. 50-62 miles East of Vitebsk, we cannot but conclude that it would have been possible to evacuate these camps as late as the 15th July 1941.

The German communiqué of the 17th July speaks of the capture of Smolensk but the Soviet communiqué of the 23rd July states that "Smolensk continues to be held, "German formations which had reached it several days previously, have been rejected." It may be assumed, therefore, that the German communiqué of the 17th July was not quite accurate and that on the 16th July only some light German units had reached Smolensk and had possibly entered the outskirts of the city—a fact which supplied the Germans with a foundation for the communiqué about the capture of the city. This hypothesis is confirmed by the historians W. E. D. Allen and P. Muratov, who say that German units were in the region of Smolensk as early as the 17th July, but remark that "it was not the end but only the beginning of the battle of Smolensk."

The battle of Smolensk, during which there were no major moves by either army, continued for two weeks. As late as the 28th July, the German communiqué states:

"The Battle of Smolensk is nearing a favourable conclusion" but it was not until 6th August that the Germans published a special communiqué announcing the completion of this operation and describing its course.

This short summary of the military operations in the sector of Smolensk suggests without any doubt that, not only on the 12th July, but even on the 13th, 14th and probably also on the 15th July the "special" camps might have been evacuated on foot, without any difficulty. These camps could easily have been transferred in one day to the city of Smolensk, some 15½-28 miles distant, after which there would have been two weeks in which to evacuate them further, no matter how slowly, under cover of the armies fighting in the battle of Smolensk. During that fortnight they might have easily marched to some railway station which was still functioning, or even gone on foot to Moscow, which was only about 187 miles away. In any case such a march would have been much shorter and less exhausting than the long marches, lasting many weeks and covering distances of several hundred miles, done by other Polish prisoners-of-war, such as e. g. the march from Brody to Złotonosz (see reference on pp. 99-100).

The question arises, therefore, why the commandant of the Special Camp No. 1 O. N., major of the N. K. V. D. Vetoshnikov, who on an unspecified date left "together with several staff members" the camp entrusted to his care and made attempts in Smolensk on the 12th July to secure waggons, did not return during the period of three, four or more days between the 12th July and the capture of Smolensk by the Germans. The assertions of Vetoshnikov that he had unsuccessfully tried to get in touch with Moscow in order to receive from the Central Authorities "permission to start on foot" are not convincing. In the face of the enemy and in direct danger one would expect a senior officer to show initiative and not to wait passively for orders or "permission" from his superiors, especially in this case since the railway network in the Smolensk region was particularly well developed.

It is extremely odd that such ill luck should have haunted the three "special" camps of the Polish officer P. O. Ws. Situated on the most important sector from an operational point of view, distant only by 200 miles from the chief dispositional centre, Moscow, and by more than 350 miles from the boundary of "Soviet-German interests" in a region which was captured by the enemy at the earliest of the 24th day of the war—it was still not possible to evacuate them. The senior authorities, of whom very many were stationed in this important sector, forgot all about them, and their immediate superiors proved criminally negligent. Silently, entirely without publicity, all of them apparently fell into German hands and no trace was ever found of them until the discovery of the bodies in the Katyn graves.

This particular misfortune becomes even more amazing when we recall the fate of other Polish Prisoner of War camps (see pages 99-100). The Skniłow Camp near Lwów, 40 miles from the Soviet-German frontier, situated in a region which the Germans captured a few days after the outbreak of the war, was successfully evacuated on foot to Zolotonosha on the Dnieper and thence by rail; it was not forgotten by the superior authorities in spite of the fact that it was some 800 miles distant from Moscow. The Brody Camp, in a region which the Germans reached on the 2nd of July (and distant by 65 miles from the Soviet-German frontier) also was successfully evacuated to Zolotonosha, although it was situated right off the beaten track, far from any large town or the G. H. Q. of senior authorities.

More such examples, could be given but taking these two alone into consideration the fate of the three "special" camps near Smolensk becomes so unintelligible, that the question whether these camps really existed spontaneously arises, especially since, up to the time of the publication of the Soviet communique of the 15th April 1943 no one was aware of the presence of special Officers' Camps in these regions.

The Special Commission evidently realized that such a doubt must of necessity arise in the minds of critical observers, and, therefore, after quoting the statements of the two witnesses, given above to the effect that it was not possible to evacuate the Polish P. O. W's from the Smolensk region in the period around the 12th July 1941—it made a special effort to prove that some Polish prisoners of war had actually been living in the neighbourhood of Smolensk after it was captured by the Germans. They interrogated as many as fourteen witnesses on this subject.

"The presence of the Polish war prisoners in the camps in the Smolensk Region is confirmed by the testimony of numerous witnesses who saw these Poles near Smolensk in the early months of the occupation up to September 1941 inclusive."

The Report gave first place to the statement by Maria Sashneva, an elementary school teacher in the village of Zenkovo, probably regarding her testimony as the most important since it is supported by a specific "documentary evidence".

Sashneva told the Commission that in August 1941, she sheltered for one night a war prisoner whom she immediately identified by his uniform to be a Pole, as during 1940 and 1941 she used to see groups of Polish prisoners of war working the road under guard. As Sashneva was a teacher, she took an interest in this Pole, who told her that he had been an elementary school teacher in Poland. From a conversation Sashneva learned that he was a Lieutenant of the reserve, taken prisoner by the Soviet at Brest Litovsk and that "he had spent over a year in the camp at Smolensk." Evidently the Pole did not tell her the name of the locality where his camp was situated, since Sashneva did not mention it. She heard however, from him many particulars and in particular told the Special Commission that "when the Germans arrived they seized the Polish camp and instituted a strict regime in it. The Germans did not regard the Poles as human beings. They oppressed and outraged them in every way. On some occasions Poles were shot without any reason at all. He decided to escape. Speaking of himself, he said that his wife, too, was a teacher and that he had two brothers and two sisters . . ."

After quoting this statement the Report of the Special Commission added that "On leaving the next day the Pole gave his name" which Sashneva wrote down. She showed the book where she had noted it to the Special Commission which quoted in its Report "that in the book entitled 'Practical Studies in Natural History' by Yagodovsky, there was a note on the last page saying 'Juzeph and Sofia Loek, House 25, Ogorodnaya St., town Zamostye'".

Since among the several thousands of names published by the Germans in A. M. the name "Jozef Lojek" was also found under the file number 3796, the Special Commission, convinced by Sashneva's statement, which now proved to be "supported by written evidence", concluded that "thus, from the German report, it would appear that Juzeph Loek had been shot one year before the witness Sashneva saw him".

The next witness quoted in the Report was Danilenkov, a peasant from the collective farm of the Katyn Rural Soviet. His statement was much shorter it simply said "In August and September, 1941, when the Germans arrived, I used to meet Poles working on the roads in groups of 15-20".

No further statements on the subject of the sojourn of Polish prisoners of war in these regions after their capture by the Germans were quoted and the Report merely noted "that similar statements were made before the Commission by twelve further witnesses whose names were listed, as well as 'by others'."

If at this point of the Report of the Special Commission we come to a critical analysis, we find that the Soviet thesis that the "special" camps with Polish war prisoners officers and men totalling approximately 10,000-15,000 persons were captured in July 1941 by the Germans—is far from being satisfactorily proved. The proofs are limited to the statement made by Sashneva who sheltered one of the prisoners for one night, and to the statement of Danilenkov who "in August and September 1941 saw groups of Poles of 15-20 men working on the roads", a fact confirmed by a further twelve witnesses who made "similar statements". It is not surprising, therefore, that the Special Commission decided that it would be useful to strengthen this thesis by the depositions of four further witnesses, to establish the fact that in the Autumn of 1941 (the witness had said "in August—

September 1941") the Germans had carried out a round-up of Polish war prisoners both in the forests and in the villages.

Judging by this part of the Report of the Special Commission, the fate of the three "special" Polish P. O. W.'s camps in July, August and September 1931 seems to have been as follows:

According to the testimony of Major Vetoshnikov and engineer Ivanov it was impossible to evacuate these camps by rail, and since permission had not come from Moscow for their evacuation on foot, they fell into German hands; the Germans introduced in them "a strict regime" (Cf. witness Sashneva). Probably at the time of seizing these camps, and in any case after their capture, prisoners escaped from them (e. g. Juzeph Loek); these escapes must have been fairly numerous and by no means sporadic, since "in August and September" (witness Fatkov) the Germans instituted round-ups in the forests and villages for escaping prisoners of war. These round-ups were wholly successful, all escaped war prisoners were caught and thus did not avoid re-incarceration and, ultimately, death at the hands of Hitlerite murderers in Katyn forest. Juzeph Loek was also killed in spite of Sashneva's help. Notwithstanding the nearness of the Polish frontier, the knowledge of the local language, and help offered by the local population, and in spite of the favourable season—not one of the eight thousand odd Polish officers, who were supposed to have been transferred to the three "special" camps from Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostaszkow, succeeded in escaping. Nor, up to the present day, has even one of them been found.

If we consider that this occurred in August–September, 1941, at a distance of approximately 30 miles from the front, while stubborn fighting was going on in the neighbourhood of Smolensk, which broke out in connection with Marshal Rokossovsky's counter-offensive in the direction of Dukhovshchyzna and that of General Boldin in the direction of Jelnia (Cf. Allen and Muratoff, page 47) it would be difficult indeed to magnify the unintentional homage paid to the efficiency of the Wehrmacht by the report of the Special Commission.

It is on the other hand impossible to disregard the fact that this very large group of Polish prisoners of war—numbering more than 10,000, officers and men, for the most part, young and healthy, appear to have been in the matter of escaping exceptionally inefficient and indolent.

During the second world war, Poles have achieved a certain measure of renown for their skill in slipping across frontiers, for moving about in enemy-occupied territory, and for escaping from prisons and camps. Those abilities of the Poles in this respect have even been confirmed by Stalin, who in his conversation with General Sikorski on 3.12.1941 expressed his supposition that several thousand of the Polish officers searched for in the Northernmost parts of the U. S. S. R. had probably succeeded, after their release from Soviet camps, in escaping to Manchuria without the knowledge of the local authorities (see page 191).

Therefore the fact that out of several thousand Polish prisoners of war not a single one managed to make his way to Poland, neither during work on road constructions under Soviet or German supervision, nor in the chaos caused by the capture of the camps by the Germans, coupled with the fact that those who escaped did not succeed, in spite of the most favourable conditions, present such an improbable picture as to be wholly unbelievable. Inevitably the critical inquirer is led to doubt whether the three "special" camps from which no sign of life was given and about the existence of which the world was wholly unaware until the publication of the Soviet communiqué of the 15th April 1943—had ever really existed at all.

This very justifiable doubt, however, presupposes that all the witnesses that were brought before the Special Commission gave consistently false evidence but that in itself would be improbable and in actual fact was almost certainly not the case. It must be remembered that none of them had admitted to having seen more than 15–20 Polish prisoners at one time and there had been no mention of officers.

If we cast our minds back to the fate that befell the Polish P. O. W.'s of other ranks in Russian hands (see p. 99 above), we recollect that very many of them were sent to build roads and airfields in Soviet Occupied Poland and neighbouring territories and were organised for this purpose into camps which were moved about according to where the labour was most needed at any one time. On the face of it therefore it is quite probable that some of these camps were situated at some time in the Smolensk area, and strong evidence exists which points to the fact that this was the case.

This evidence comes from the testimony of a Polish N. C. O. (Witness 38) who after being liberated from a German camp, by the Americans in June 1944

joined the Polish Army in the West. He was taken prisoner on Sept. 17th; 1939 by the Russians and put in the Transit Camp for P. O. W's. at Kremenchug from where he was sent on, together with 3,000 other ranks, to work in the "Rosa Luxembourg" iron-ore mine at Krivoi Rog. In April 1940, some 1,500 Polish P. O. W's. working in the mine were sent to the neighbourhood of Smolensk. He said that "the journey had lasted two to three weeks and I remember that somewhere about the middle of April we were unloaded from the train in a wood which I later realised was 5-7 kilometres (3-5 miles) from Smolensk. I know the distance because we were sent to work in the city". The camp had been to the East of Smolensk, far from any habitation and had had no special name. He thought that it had been previously occupied but he hadn't known by whom. The prisoners were taken nearly every day to Smolensk and on the way there passed through at Kolhoz called Popovka, about 4 Kil. from the camp. "We worked on road repairs on the outskirts of the city, and sometimes we repaired the streets of the city itself and also the bridges". Going to and from work they had met other Polish prisoners with some of whom he had had a chance to talk and had learnt that there were in that area two other camps for Polish prisoners, one like his own guarded by N. K. V. D. and the other containing men who were allowed more freedom being able to go about unescorted and some even being used to drive Soviet lorries.

One of these drivers had told him that he, on one occasion had been sent to transport the belongings of Polish officers from a building in a wood.

In the late Autumn of 1940 this witness together with most of his fellow prisoners was removed from the Smolensk camp Westwards to Grodek Jagiellonski,¹ and put into the camp at Czerlany where they worked on aerodrome construction until the outbreak of the Soviet-German War. Most of the prisoners had then been evacuated to the East, but he with some others was taken by the Germans and worked subsequently in the Todt Organisation on the East Front and afterwards in Cherbourg.

The evidence of this Polish N. C. O. is interestingly confirmed by Warrant Officer Marjan Klimozak in an article in the Moscow "Wolna Polska" 7 (48) dated Feb. 24th, 1944, entitled "I was a prisoner in Katyn Forest." He wrote that, as a Polish N. C. O. he had been taken prisoner by the Russians in 1939 and that from February to March 1941 "I was for some time in the camp No. 2 O. M. near Smolensk in the same Katyn Forest."

The prisoners had been sawing wood in the forest and repairing roads. In his group "there were about 300 Polish officers and men. I know that they were not ill treated. I didn't see any beating and we heard nothing at all about shooting", wrote this soldier from Berling's Army. He emphasised that "none of my fellow prisoners perished and there were officers among them." Klimczak did not say whether these officers had disclosed their rank to the Soviets or whether they had cautiously concealed them. He gave the names of three of them and said that up till the time he himself had been removed to Archangel (March 1941) (page 53 above) they had been alive and treated like the others.

From this evidence, both Polish and Russian, which is not found in the Report of the Special Commission, we may conclude that there were in fact three camps for Polish prisoners in the Smolensk area, either West or East of the city, but that they were not "special" camps for officers and the total population of them was far from being 10-15,000. Most of the prisoners were removed from that area before the outbreak of the Soviet German War either to the West or to the Far North. But some of these prisoners are quite likely to have been left in the neighbourhood of Smolensk and it is therefore highly probable that the Soviet witness Danilenkov had in fact seen in the first months of the German occupation "Poles working on the roads in groups of 15-20."

2. *The execution by the Germans of Polish prisoners of war in the autumn of 1941.*

According to the findings of the Soviet Special Commission, the Polish officers whose bodies were discovered in the Katyn graves had been shot by the staff of the "Headquarters of the 537th Engineering Battalion" billeted in the Rest House of the N. K. V. D. at "Kose Gory". There were usually about 30 people at the Headquarters among them Lt. Colonel Arnes, his aide Lt. Rekst, Sub. Lt. Hott, Sergeant-Major Lumert and N. C. O.'s Rose, Isikes, Gronewski and others.

From the Report it appears that the Special Commission reached this conclusion from the following sets of proofs:

A. statements of witnesses Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya who had been employed for a time in the Rest House as domestics to the German Headquarters staff, resident there;

¹ West of Lwow in Eastern, Russian occupied Poland.

B. statements made by six witnesses, domiciled in the neighbourhood of Kose Gory, whose names were mentioned in the Report of the Special Commission;

C. statement of witness B. Bazilevsky, a Professor of Astronomy, who for a time acted as assistant Burgomaster of Smolensk, under the Germans, and notes made by the Burgomaster of Smolensk, lawyer B. Menshagin, a traitor who subsequently made his escape with the retreating Germans. The following is an analysis of these proofs:—

(A) The first group of proofs consisted of statements of three witnesses whose ages and professions were not divulged in the Report which were quoted at great length.

These witnesses were three young peasant girls from the village of Borok of the Katyn Rural Soviet, who had been appointed, at the request of the German Commandant of the Katyn settlement, by the headman of the village of Borok to do domestic work in the country house where the Germans were quartered. The Report did not specify the precise nature of their work; it was probably connected with the kitchen, the latter being frequently mentioned in their statements. The Report stated that shortly after starting work—Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya began to notice that the Germans were up to “something shady” in the country house.

It seems from the Report that they had been particularly surprised by the fact that, after reporting for work for the first time, the commanding officer Lt. Colonel Arnes, had wished to see them himself and had given them instructions as to the way they must behave while working at German Headquarters.

The Report of the Special Commission describes this incident as follows:

“On arrival in ‘Kose Gory’ they were told through an interpreter about a number of restrictions: they were absolutely forbidden to go far from the country house or to go to the forest, to enter rooms without being called and without being escorted by German soldiers, to remain in the grounds of the country house at night. They were allowed to come to work and leave after work only by a definite route and only escorted by soldiers. This warning was given to Alexeyeva, Mikhailova, and Konakhovskaya, through an interpreter, personally by the Chief of the German Institution Oberst Leutnant Arnes, who for this purpose summoned them one at a time.”

The most comprehensive statement on the “shady work” which went on in the country house was made by Alexeyeva. After stressing that the interpreter Johann had warned the Russian domestic servants several times to hold their tongues and not to chatter in the village about what they saw and heard in the country house occupied then by the Germans, Alexeyeva emphasised that she had guessed from “a number of signs” that “the Germans were engaged in some shady doings”. She said that “at the close of August and during most of September 1941 several trucks used to come practically every day to the Kose Gory” country house and from listening to the engines she had come to the conclusion that they had stopped in the wood for some 30–60 minutes before driving up to the country house. “Simultaneously with the noise of the engines ceasing, single shots would be heard” one after another “at approximately even intervals”. The shooting would “die down and the trucks would drive up right to the country house. German N. C. O.’s and soldiers came out of the trucks. Talking noisily they went to wash in the bath-house after which they engaged in drunken orgies. On these days fire was always kept burning in the bath-house stove”.

She went on to describe how on the days when the trucks had arrived, more German soldiers had come to the country house for whom extra beds had been put up in the soldiers’ canteen and additional meals cooked in the kitchen. “Shortly before the trucks reached the country house armed soldiers went to the forest, evidently to the spot where the trucks stopped, because in half an hour they returned in these trucks, together with the soldiers who lived permanently in the country house.”

Alexeyeva explained that she would probably not have noticed all these happenings had it not been for the fact that whenever many new soldiers arrived at the country house, the Russian girls had been “driven to the kitchen if we happened to be in the courtyard near the house; or they would not let us out of the kitchen if we happened to be in it.”

This fact had made Alexeyeva “pay close attention to what was going on at the country house”. She had noted these “shady doings”, and had “inferred that the Germans brought people in the trucks to the country house and shot them”. She had even “guessed approximately where this took place as, when coming to and leaving the country house, I noticed freshly thrown-up earth in several places near the road. The area of this freshly thrown-up earth increased every day. In the course of time the earth in these spots began to look normal.”

In answer to a question put by the Special Commission as to what kind of people had been shot in the forest near the country house, Alexeyeva had replied that Polish war prisoners had been shot and in confirmation of her words stated that "there were days when no trucks arrived at the country house, but even so, soldiers left the house for the forest whence came frequent single shots". On returning the soldiers "always took a bath and then drank."

Alexeyeva said that she had on one occasion stayed behind rather later than usual; although she had not finished the work for which she had remained behind, she had been ordered by a German N. C. O. to leave and as usual had been escorted back to the highway by a German soldier. After she had walked along the highway some 150-200 metres (165-220 yds.) from the place where the road branched off to the country house, she had seen a group of about 30 Polish war prisoners "marching along the highway under heavy German escort"; she explained to the Commission that she had known that they were Poles because "even before the war and for some time after the Germans came I used to meet on the highway Polish war prisoners wearing the same uniform with their characteristic four-cornered hats."

The girl went on to describe how she had hidden in the bushes near the roadside and having seen the group turn towards the road leading to the country house had waited to see what would happen. When some 20-30 minutes later she had heard the familiar single shots "everything became clear to me and I hurried home".

"I also concluded that evidently the Germans were shooting Poles not only in the daytime, when we were working at the country house, but also at night, in our absence. I understood this also from recalling the occasions when all the officers and men who lived in the country house, with the exception of the sentries, woke up late, about noon. On several occasions we guessed about the arrival of the Poles in Kose Gory from the tense atmosphere that descended on the country house. All the officers left the country house and only a few sentries remained in it, while the Sergeant Major kept checking up on the sentries over the telephone. . . ."

The statement made by Mikhailova, quoted in the report of the Special Commission, was identical in its context and although it was shorter, it contained details not submitted by Alexeyeva. Mikhailova too at first when "in September, 1941, shooting was heard very often in the Kose Gory forest", had not taken any notice of the trucks, "closed at the sides and on top and painted green", which used to drive up to the country house and which were always escorted by German N. C. O.'s. Then she had noticed that these trucks never entered the garage and also that they were never unloaded. "They used to come very often, especially in September, 1941. Among the N. C. O.'s who always sat with the drivers, I began to notice one tall one with a pale face and red hair. When these trucks drove up to the country house, all the Germans, as if at a command, went to the bathhouse and bathed for a very long time after which they drank heavily in the country house. Once this tall red-headed German got down from the truck, went to the kitchen and asked for water. When he was drinking the water out of a glass I noticed blood on the cuff of the right sleeve on his uniform."

According to the Report on one occasion Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya witnessed "the shooting of two Polish war prisoners who had evidently escaped from the Germans and had subsequently been caught".

The passage from Mikhailova's statement, on which the Special Commission based this conclusion was as follows:—"Once Konakhovskaya and I were at our usual work in the kitchen when we heard a noise near the country house. On coming out we saw two Polish war prisoners surrounded by German soldiers who were explaining something to N. C. O. Rose. The Oberst Leutnant Arnes came over to them and told Rose something. We hid some distance away, as we were afraid that Rose would beat us up for being inquisitive."

"We were discovered, however, and at a signal from Rose the mechanic Grenewski drove us into the kitchen and the Poles away from the country house. A few minutes later we heard shots. The German soldiers and N. C. O. Rose, who soon returned, were engaged in animated conversation. Wanting to find out what the Germans had done to the detained Poles, Konakhovskaya and I came out again. Arnes' aide, who came out simultaneously with us from the main entrance of the country house, asked Rose something in German, to which the latter answered, also in German: 'Everything is in order.' We understood those words because the Germans often used them in their conversation. From all that took place I concluded that these two Poles had been shot."

The Report added that Mikhailova's story about the shooting of the two Poles (which can hardly be described as an eye-witness account) was supported by similar testimony on Konakhovskaya's part.

As was stressed in the Report, each girl had kept her observations on the subject of the "shady doings" in August and September in the country house strictly to herself and had not discussed them with her companions, yet without previously communicating with each other, all three of them "frightened by the happenings at the country house decided to quit work on some convenient pretext." It evidently took the girls three months to find a suitable excuse for leaving their work during which time life at the country house seems to have been free from "shady doings" as the Report makes no mention of any untoward happenings during October, November and December. It merely described how "taking advantage of the reduction of their 'wages' from nine to three marks a month at the beginning of January, 1942, on Mikhailova's suggestion they did not report for work" and how on the evening of the same day "a car came to fetch them, they were brought to the country house and locked up by way of punishment".

Apparently it was not until they were sitting in the cell at night that the girls had shared their impressions as was proved by Mikhailova's statement made at the interrogation on 24.12.1943. (At this point the Report recorded for the first time the actual date when the testimony was given, such dates seldom vouchsafed in the Report as a whole):

"Here for the first time we talked frankly about the happenings at the country house. I told all I knew. It turned out that Konakhovskaya and Alexeyeva also knew these facts but, like myself, had been afraid to discuss them. I learned from them that it was Polish war prisoners the Germans used to shoot at Kose Gory. Alexeyeva said that once in the Autumn of 1941, when she was going home after work, she saw the Germans driving a large group of Polish war prisoners into Kose Gory Forest and then she heard shooting." (In making this statement Mikhailova had evidently forgotten that she had according to the Report "herself" witnessed the shooting of two Polish war prisoners and had therefore no need to learn from Alexeyeva that Polish prisoners were shot.)

The Report further stated "that similar testimony was given by Alexeyeva and Konakhovskaya."

After comparing notes, Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya arrived at "the firm conviction—that in August and September, 1941, the Germans had engaged in mass shooting of Polish war prisoners at the country house in Kose Gory."

In confirmation of Alexeyeva's testimony, the Report quoted a statement made by her father, Mikhail Alexeyev, who said that "as far back as in the Autumn of 1941, during her work at the country house" she had told him of her observations complaining "that she was afraid to work at the country house" and that "she did not know how to get away". Once she had told him that "in Kose Gory forest the Germans were shooting Poles" and he had warned her very strongly "that she should not tell anyone else about it, as otherwise the Germans would learn and then the whole family would suffer".

Accepting, as it did, the evidence of Alexeyeva, Mikhailova, and Konakhovskaya, the Report failed to explain certain facts that inevitably followed from it. This evidence pointed to a set of circumstances that did not in themselves allow of Polish prisoners of war having been shot in any very great number. It would clearly have been impossible for many prisoners to have been taken to the place of execution if they had had to have been brought there, as the Report maintained was the case, "practically every day" in "several trucks" sometimes driven on foot in "large groups" of thirty men, for a period of barely one month, namely "the end of August and most of September".

Moreover the number of German soldiers who could have been accommodated in the canteen on the beds specially put up for the purpose could scarcely have been sufficient to accomplish the shooting of hundreds of prisoners daily and the digging of pits for and the burial of the corpses within the "half an hour or whole hour" during which they were reported as having been away in the forest.

It should be remembered, in this connection, that the Report spoke several times of single shots having been heard which rules out the possibility of the prisoners having been murdered with any weapon more expeditious than a pistol.

(B) The second group of proofs supposedly-proving that Polish prisoners of war were shot in Kose Gory by the Germans in the autumn of 1941, consisted of testimonies obtained from inhabitants of nearby villages. From these the Report of the Special Commission did not give any verbatim quotations but listed six

names (adding "and others") and stated that these people had said that "Polish war prisoners used to be brought to Kose Gory in small groups of 20-30 men escorted by five to seven German soldiers" and that "these witnesses also heard shots in the forest at Kose Gory". These general statements made incidentally, in two cases, by witnesses whose testimonies had already appeared in the German *Antliches Material* (see above), namely, Kisselew and Krivosertsev did not specify the date on which these small groups of Polish war prisoners had been brought to Kose Gory, nor from where they had come and in what numbers—and can hardly be said to have proved that the Germans executed more than 10,000 Polish officers and men in the Autumn of 1941.

(C) The Report ascribed especially "great importance in ascertaining what took place at Kose Gory country house in the Autumn of 1941", to the proofs of the third group, and in particular to the statement made by B. Bazilevsky, Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory in Smolensk. As to Bazilevsky, Jerzy Szapiro, in the article of the Moscow-inspired "*Wolna Polska*" (Free Poland) already referred to, wrote that this "former deputy of the Burgomaster Menshagin . . . who was forced by the Germans to accept this position, subsequently went into hiding in order not to participate in the horrible crime of the occupiers."

He referred to him as a "typical representative of the Russian intelligentsia, who at first believed that he would succeed in saving the innocent victims" and said that he had exposed the "ideology of the executioners of Kose Gory and explained in detail in what manner Commandant von Schwetz and his assistants had committed this crime."

Here is a summary of the evidence given by him found in the Report:

Early in September 1941 he was said to have addressed to Burgomaster Menshagin "who enjoyed the special confidence of the German Command and in particular of the Smolensk Kommandant von Schwetz," a request to solicit the Kommandant von Schwetz for the liberation of the teacher Zhighlinsky from a war prisoner camp". The Report said that in connection with this request, conversations had taken place between Bazilevsky and Menshagin, during which the latter "betrayed" to the Astronomer the "secret of Katyn." This, according to the Report of the Special Commission, took place in the following way:—

Menshagin had informed Bazilevsky that his intervention had failed because as Schwetz had told him, "instructions had been received from Berlin prescribing that the strictest regime be maintained undeviatingly in regard to war prisoners without any slackening."

"I involuntarily retorted" Bazilevsky had testified, "Can anything be stricter than the regime existing in the camp?" Menshagin looked at me in a strange way and bending to my ear, answered in a low voice: 'Yes, there can be. The Russians can at least be left to die off, but as to the Polish war prisoners, the orders say that they are to be simply exterminated'. 'How is that? How should it be understood?' I explained. 'This should be understood literally. There is such a directive from Berlin', answered Menshagin, and asked me 'for the sake of all that is Holy, not to tell anyone about this.'

"About a fortnight after this conversation with Menshagin, when I was again received by him, I could not keep from asking: 'What news about the Poles?' Menshagin hesitated for a little, but then answered: 'Everything is over with them. Von Schwetz told me that they had been shot somewhere near Smolensk.' Seeing my bewilderment Menshagin warned me again about the necessity of keeping this affair in the strictest secrecy and then started 'explaining' to me the German policy in this matter. He told me that the shooting of the Poles was one link in the general chain of anti-Polish policy pursued by Germany, which became especially marked in connection with the conclusion of the Russo-Polish Treaty".

Bazilevsky is supposed to have had a similar conversation (on a date not specified in the Report of the Special Commission) with the Sonderführer of the 7th Department of the German Kommandantur in Smolensk, a Baltic German named Hirschfeld. Since Hirschfeld—"spoke good Russian" there is no doubt, that his "political" arguments had been properly understood by the Russian Astronomer and accurately put before the Soviet Special Commission.

"With cynical frankness Hirschfeld told me that the harmfulness and inferiority of the Poles had been proved by history and therefore reduction of Poland's population would fertilise the soil and make possible an extension of Germany's living space. In this connection Hirschfeld boasted that absolutely no intellectuals had been left in Poland, as they had been all hanged, shot, or confined in camps".

Quite amazed by these revelations concerning the German policy in Poland, the Professor of Astronomy had immediately communicated them to his colleague,

I. Yefimov, a Professor of Physics, who—on being examined by the Special Commission—had confirmed the fact that he had talked with Bazilevsky in the Autumn of 1941.

Bazilevsky's statements, which—in the opinion of the Special Commission—were of particular importance for the elucidation of the Katyn mystery were additionally confirmed by the documentary evidence of Menshagin's notebook "containing 17 incomplete pages" found by the Red Army in the files of the Smolensk Municipal Board and in which there were various notes in his handwriting. The authenticity of this handwriting had been confirmed not only by the testimony of Bazilevsky "who knew Menshagin's hand well, but also by expert graphologists. The Report of the Special Commission went on to state that "among the various notes on economic matters (on firewood, electric power, trade, etc.)" had been a plan for the organisation of a Jewish ghetto in Smolensk and following two entries; "Page 10, dated 15th August, 1941, contains the following note: 'All fugitive Polish war prisoners are to be detained and delivered to the Commandant's office.'

"Page 15 (undated) contains the entry: 'Are there any rumours among the population concerning the shooting of Polish war prisoners in Kose Gory (for Umnov).'"

It transpired—in the opinion of the Special Commission—that "from the first entry finally that on August 15, 1941, Polish war prisoners were still in the Smolensk area and secondly, that they were being arrested by the German authorities.

"The second entry was held to prove that the German Command worried by the possibility of rumours about the crime it had committed circulating among the civilian population, issued special instructions for the purpose of checking this surmise". The Report explained that Umnov, mentioned at the end of the last entry was "the Chief of the Russian police in Smolensk during the early months of its occupation".

28. *History of the German provocation in the Spring of 1943.*

A. *German search for false witnesses.*—After proving that the Katyn victims had been murdered by the Germans in the autumn of 1941, the Report of the Soviet Special Commission proceeded to a discussion of the "German provocations in the spring of 1943."

The report gave the following reasons for this provocation: "In the winter of 1942–43 the general military situation changed sharply to the disadvantage of the Germans. The military power of the Soviet Union was continually growing stronger. The unity between the U. S. S. R. and her Allies was growing stronger. The Germans resolved to launch a provocation, using for this purpose the crimes they had committed in the Katyn forest, and ascribing them to the organs of the Soviet authorities. In this way they intended to set the Russians and Poles at loggerheads and to cover up the traces of their own crimes. A priest, Ogloblin, of the village of Kuprino in the Smolensk district, stated:

"After the events at Stalingrad, when the Germans began to feel uncertain, they launched this business. The people started to say that the "Germans are trying to mend their affairs"...."

With regard to the methods of provocation, the Report stated that "having embarked on the preparation of the Katyn provocation, the Germans first set about looking for witnesses who would, under the influence of persuasion, bribes or threats, give the testimony which the Germans needed. The attention of the Germans was attracted to the peasant Parfen Gavrilovitch Kisselev, born in 1870, who lived in the hamlet nearest to the house in Kose Gory."

The Report went on to quote a very full statement made by this old man of 74, who frequently explained that when making his depositions to the Germans (see above page 302) he had been forced to lie, but that now he was telling the whole truth. A concise summary of his arguments as given in the Report follows:

In the Autumn of 1941 he was said to have been summoned to report to the Gestapo at the station of Gnozdo, where the officer who spoke to him through an interpreter had insisted on his giving false evidence on the subject of the shooting of Polish officers in Kose Gory. "I answered"—Kisselev told the Special Commission—"that I had never heard of the N. K. V. D. shooting people at Kose Gory . . . since Kose Gory is an absolutely open and much frequented place and if shootings had gone on there, the entire population of the neighbouring villages would have known."

In spite of a promise of a "big reward" and, the officer "having obstinately insisted" that he should give false evidence, Kisselev is said to have refused the Germans without, on this occasion incurring any evil consequences.

In February 1943, however, matters had been different. Summoned once again to appear before the Gestapo to give evidence of the shooting of Polish

officers by the N. K. V. D. he had refused, whereas the interpreter had picked up a handwritten document from the table, read it out to him and ordered him to sign it. Kisselev said that at first he had refused, but when the interpreter had begun to force him "by abuse and threats" and had finally shouted "either you sign it at once or we shall destroy you. Make your choice"—he, very frightened had signed the document thinking, "that this would be the end of the matter."¹

This had in fact, not been so, because the Gestapo, he said, had forced him subsequently to give evidence before the various delegations which had arrived in Katyn, and especially before the "Polish delegation."

When brought by the Gestapo interpreter, before the "Polish Delegation" he was alleged to have forgotten the contents of the protocol he had signed for the Gestapo, to have got mixed up in his answers and to have finally refused to speak, saying "I know nothing about the shooting of Polish officers".

"The German officer got very angry"—Kisselev stated before the Special Commission—"and the interpreter roughly dragged me away from the 'delegation' and chased me off." In consequence, he had been arrested and taken by car to the Smolensk prison, where, for six weeks he had been "beaten more than questioned". He is reported to have said that as a result of this treatment—"I lost all my strength, my hearing became poor, and I could not move my right arm". Nevertheless as he had persisted in refusing to bear false witness in favour of the Germans, the German officer had summoned him and told him: "You see the consequences of your obstinacy, Kisselev. We have decided to execute you. In the morning we shall take you to Katyn Forest and hang you."



The old man as a consequence of this threat and further beatings with rubber clubs by soldiers broke down and "agreed to appear publicly with a fallacious tale about shooting of Poles by Bolsheviks."

He said that on each occasion before being taken to the graves his Gestapo interpreter "used to come to my house, call me out into the yard, take me aside to make sure that no one would hear, and for half an hour make me memorise by heart everything he would have to say about the alleged shooting of the Polish officers by the N. K. V. D., in 1940." At the end of his disposition Kisselev told how on one occasion he had been taken by surprise by an unexpected question, and forgetting to lie, had given a "true" answer. Finally he begged the Special Commission to believe him that "all the time I felt pangs of conscience as I knew that in reality the Polish officers had been shot by the Germans in 1941. I had

¹ The document signed by Kisselev in the German Commandant's Office was worded—according to his testimony before the Special Commission, as follows: "I, Kisselev, resident of a hamlet in the Kose Gory area, personally witnessed the shooting of Polish officers by staff members of the N. K. V. D. in 1940." The text of this deposition however was couched in quite different terms from the one published by the Germans above his signature. (see p. 302).

no other choice, as I was constantly threatened with the repetition of my arrest and torture."

Kisselev's testimony, quoted above, was confirmed before the Special Commission by his wife, his son and a tenant and was supported by the protocol of a medical examination which had established "injury to shoulder and considerable impairment of hearing."

After having secured the "testimony" of Kisselev, the Germans in their search for further "witnesses" had according to the Soviet Report turned their attention to railway workers at the Gnezdovo station.

The Report of the Special Commission admitted that it was the station at which Polish war prisoners had arrived in the spring of 1940. The Germans had evidently wanted to obtain corresponding testimony from the railwaymen. For this purpose "in spring 1943, the Germans summoned to the Gestapo the stationmaster of Gnezdovo station, Ivanov, the stationmaster on duty, Savvateyev and others."

Ivanov, born in 1882, had told the Soviet authorities that he had been interrogated in March 1943 by a German officer in the presence of an interpreter. When he had pointed out that the shooting by the N. K. V. D. in 1940 of Polish officers, who had arrived at the Gnezdovo station in the Spring of that year, could not have taken place, as he had himself come across them, working on road construction in 1940-41, up to the time of the capture of Smolensk by the Germans, the German officer at first tried to persuade him to give false evidence promising "to provide for his material needs" and had then threatened him with torture and shooting. In view, however, of his steadfast bearing the Germans had given up the idea of making use of him and had limited themselves to forcing him to sign a protocol in German which had not, contained any false testimony. When he had insisted that a Russian translation should be appended to the German original "the officer finally went beside himself with fury, beat me up with a rubber club and drove me off the premises."

Savvateyev, born in 1880, is alleged to have had a similar difference of opinion with a German officer on the subject of a "short protocol" which he had not understood. At first he had refused to sign it, but when the interpreter "seized a rubber club hanging on the wall and made to strike me", he had signed the protocol shoved at him and, on leaving, had been told by the interpreter not to divulge anything to anyone, as otherwise, he would be shot.

The Report of the Special Commission stated further that the search for "witnesses" had not been limited to the above-mentioned persons. The Germans had striven "persistently to locate former employees of the N. K. V. D. and extort from them the false testimony which the Germans needed."

"Having chanced to arrest Ignatyuk, formerly a labourer in the garage of the Smolensk Regional Administration of the N. K. V. D. the Germans stubbornly, by threats and beatings, tried to extort from him testimony that he had been a car driver and not merely a labourer in the garage, and had himself driven Polish war prisoners to the shooting site."

In the statement subsequently made to the Soviet authorities Ignatyuk, born in 1903, had said that during his first examination "by the Chief of the German police, Alferchik", he had refused to testify that he had been employed in the garage of the N. K. V. D. not only as labourer but also as driver: "Alferchik was greatly irritated . . . and he and his aide, whom he called George, tied up my head and mouth with some rag, removed my trousers, laid me on a table and began to beat me with rubber clubs."

In return for giving false evidence to the effect that he had been present as a driver during the shooting of Polish officers in 1940, Alferchik had promised Ignatyuk to liberate him from prison and get him a job with the police where he would be given good living conditions—threatening otherwise to shoot him. As the witness again refused, he had been beaten up once more and sent to the Gestapo which had also demanded that he should give false evidence about the shooting of the Polish officers. The Report of the Special Commission did not say however how Ignatyuk's encounter with the Gestapo ended.

The search instituted by the Soviet authorities for other witnesses examined by the Germans in the Katyn affair did not yield any positive results, because—according to the report of the Special Commission—Godunov (alias Godesov) and Silversov had died in 1943 before the liberation of the Smolensk region by the Red Army and Andrejev, Zhigulev and Krivosertsev had "left with the Germans or perhaps were forcibly abducted by them". (The report of the Commission did not mention the fact that the two last mentioned men were members of the German Ordnungswacht).

Only Matvey Zakharov, the coupler at Smolensk station "was located and examined by the Special Commission." He related that when at the beginning of 1943 he had been summoned to the Gestapo he had told them that he had not known the destination of the cars loaded with Polish war prisoners which had passed through Smolensk and that the officer of the Gestapo had taken "a rubber club and began to beat me up." Then the same officer, assisted by the interpreter, had laid him on a bench and had beaten him until he had fainted.

His testimony continued:—

"When I came to, the officer demanded that I sign a protocol of the examination. I had lost courage as a result of the beating and threats of shooting, so I gave false evidence and signed the protocol". He had then been released by the Gestapo.

Several days afterwards he had again been summoned to the Gestapo in order to confirm his testimony in the presence of a German General. The interpreter had warned him en route that if he refused to confirm his testimony he would have a much worse experience than he had had on his first visit to the Gestapo, so fearing a repetition of the torture, he had, when asked confirmed it. Then the interpreter had ordered him to raise his right hand and told him that he had "taken an oath and could go home." (See page 304, German data concerning Sakharov's depositions).

At the end of the chapter dealing with the German search for false witnesses the Report of the Special Commission stated that: "the Germans used persuasion, threats and torture in trying to obtain the testimony they needed, for example, from Kaverznev, former deputy chief of the Smolensk prison, and Kovalev, former staff member of the same prison. Since the search for the required number of witnesses failed to yield any success the Germans posted up in Smolensk city and the neighbouring villages a handbill summoning the population to come forward as witnesses in the case of the Katyn murders and promising rewards for any information supplied in the matter."

The Report quoted the text of this handbill and attached great importance to it as a proof that the Germans had paid for false evidence.

B. Removal from the Katyn Graves of material compromising the Germans.—After thus describing the German methods of securing false witnesses, the Report of the Special Commission passed on to show just how the Germans succeeded in removing from the Katyn graves the greater part of any material evidence which might have destroyed their case. The investigations of the Soviet Special Commission had established that before the official disclosure in April 1943 of the existence of the graves of Polish officers in Katyn, the Germans, in March of that year, had secretly opened these graves and had searched the bodies, removing from them all documents dated later than April 1940, i. e., "the time when according to the German provocational version, the Poles were shot by the Bolsheviks". In order to carry out in one month this huge task of exhuming some 11,000 bodies (this figure was mentioned en passant once only in the Report), making a detailed search, re-burying them and restoring the graves to their original state and appearance—the Special Commission affirmed that the Germans had employed 500 specially selected Russian prisoners of war, who had been shot after the completion of their task.

Stating that "the Special Commission disposes of numerous depositions of witnesses in the matter" the report quoted the testimonies of seven persons from among the medical personnel of the former Smolensk prisoner of war Camp No. 126 and of a certain Alexandra Moskvovskaya, who on 5.10.1943 "filed an application to the Extraordinary Committee for the investigation of Atrocities perpetrated by the German Invaders requesting them to summon her to give important evidence."

The fragments of statements made by two doctors, Chizhov and Khmurov, quoted in the Report of the Special Commission, established that "just about the beginning of March 1943 several groups of the physically stronger war prisoners, totalling about 500, were sent from the Smolensk Camp No. 126, ostensibly for trench work. None of these prisoners ever returned to the camp."

Identical evidence was alleged to have been submitted by two nurses and three other witnesses, whose names are mentioned in the Report, but whose statements were not quoted.

These depositions concerning the removal of 500 Russians P. O. W.'s would not of themselves have been of any significance in the Katyn affair, were it not for the additional light thrown upon them by the statement of the witness Moskvovskaya. Strange though it may seem, it appears from her statements given in the official Report of the Soviet Special Commission that she had learned in

some unspecified manner in *MARCH 1943* of events which took place in *APRIL of that same year*—but nevertheless the Special Commission held that her testimony “made it clear where the 500 war prisoners from camp 126 were actually sent.”

Moskovskaya, born in 1922, was said to have been living during the German occupation “on the outskirts of Smolensk” and to have been working “in the kitchen of a German military unit.” Having been summoned, as a result of her own application, “she told the Special Commission that before leaving for work in March 1943, when she went to fetch firewood from her shed in the yard on the banks of the Dnieper, she discovered there an unknown person who proved to be a Russian prisoner of war.”

The following paragraphs are taken verbatim from the Report:—“From conversation with him I learned that his name was Nikolai Yegorov, a native of Leningrad. Since the end of 1941 he had been in the German camp no. 126 for war prisoners in the town of Smolensk. At the beginning of March 1943, he was sent with a column of several hundred war prisoners from the camp to Katyn forest. There they, including Yegorov, were compelled to dig up graves containing bodies in the uniforms of Polish officers, drag these bodies out of the graves and take out of their pockets documents, letters, photographs, and all other articles.

“The Germans gave the strictest orders that nothing be left in the pockets on the bodies. Two war prisoners were shot because after they had searched some of the bodies, a German officer discovered some papers on these bodies.

“Articles, documents and letters extracted from the clothing on the bodies were examined by the German officers, who then compelled the prisoners to put part of the papers back into the pockets on the bodies, while the rest was flung on a heap of articles and documents they had extracted and later burned.

“Besides this, the Germans made the prisoners put into the pockets of the Polish officers some papers which they took from the cases or suitcases (I don’t remember exactly) which they had brought along. All the war prisoners lived in Katyn forest in dreadful conditions under the open sky and were extremely strongly guarded. At the beginning of April 1943, all the work planned by the Germans was apparently completed, as for three days not one of the war prisoners had to do any work . . .”

Moskovskaya went on to say that when suddenly at night all of these prisoners had been awakened and led somewhere under strengthened guard, Yegorov, sensing something was wrong, had begun to watch very closely everything that was happening. His fears had proved well founded. They had been marched for three or four hours in an unknown direction, stopped in the forest at a pit in a clearing and the Germans had begun to shoot them. The war prisoners grew agitated and restless and Yegorov had taken advantage of the confusion and had run away “into the dark forest, hearing shouts and firing.”

“After hearing this terrible story, which is engraved in my memory for the rest of my life,” continued Moskovskaya’s testimony—“I became very sorry for Yegorov, and told him to come to my room, get warm and hide at my place until he had regained his strength.” Yegorov, however, refused. In spite of the exhaustion caused by long imprisonment at the camp and the starvation of the last days, he said that “no matter what happened he was going away that very night, and intended to try to get through the front line to the Red Army.”

Unable for the time being to carry out his patriotic plan owing to lack of strength, Yegorov had remained in the shed, until the day when “he is alleged to have been found and taken away by the German police. In connection with the finding of an escaped Soviet prisoner of war in her shed, Moskovskaya had been summoned to the Gestapo but had stoutly denied knowing anything about him. Since, “prisoner Yegorov evidently had not incriminated Moskovskaya, she was let out by the Gestapo” and this made it possible for her to make her sensational statements before the Soviet Special Commission several months later.

C. *The bringing of the bodies to Katyn by the Germans.*—Thanks to Moskovskaya’s testimony it became clear why, during the period of the German “Katyn provocation,” no one among the neutral doctors and journalists present at the place of exhumation or in the professional team of the Polish Red Cross which had obviously been most active in the exhumation work, had succeeded in finding any traces of a document dated later than the first days of May 1940. The Special Commission owed it to the same witness that other possible doubts could also be removed.

As has already been noted (see page 367–73) the way in which murder of the Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn forest in August and September 1941, as

established by the Special Commission on the basis of statements made by witnesses Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya were carried out, gave rise to serious doubts as to the possibility of the Germans being able to murder such a large number of people in so short a time. These doubts were removed by the Special Commission having established "that at the time of the German provocation" the graves at Katyn contained not only bodies of persons murdered in the Katyn forest in August and September 1941 but, in addition, other bodies which had been brought in large numbers to these graves in March 1943.

Proof of this fact was given to the Special Commission in the statement made by Moskovskaya. The Report of the Special Commission, told how the escaped prisoner Yegorov, before being re-captured by the German police, had had time to tell Moskovskaya not only his personal history but also to inform her "that as well as excavating bodies in Katyn Forest the war prisoners were used to bring bodies to the Katyn Forest from other places. The bodies so brought were thrown into pits along with the bodies that had been dug up earlier.

This part of Moskovskaya's statement was confirmed also by the testimony of engineer mechanic K. S. Sukhachev, born in 1912, who, like Moskovskaya, had filed a request to be allowed to testify before the Special Commission. It appeared from his statement that when working in the municipal mill in Smolensk during the German occupation he had gone into the country one night in the second half of March 1943 to fetch foodstuffs. On the Smolensk-Vitebsk highway his truck had collided with another lorry, which, as a result of the collision "had landed in a ditch." When Sukhachev, with his own driver, had run to the overturned truck, they had been met by "heavy stench of putrifying flesh coming evidently from the truck."

"On coming nearer"—said Sukhachev—"I saw that the truck was carrying a load covered with tarpaulin and tied up with ropes. The ropes had snapped with the impact, and part of the load had fallen out on the slope. This was a horrible load—human bodies dressed in military uniforms. As far as I can remember there were some six or seven men near the truck: one German driver, two Germans armed with tommy-guns—the rest were Russian war prisoners, as they spoke Russian and were dressed accordingly."

"The Germans began to abuse my driver and then made some attempts to right the truck. In about two minutes time two more trucks drove up to the place of the accident and pulled up. A groups of Germans and Russian war prisoners, about ten men in all, came up to us from these trucks . . . By joint efforts we began to raise the truck. Taking advantage of an opportune moment I asked one of the Russians war prisoners in a low voice: 'What is it?' He answered very quickly: 'For many nights already we have been carrying bodies to Katyn Forest.'

"Before the overturned truck had been raised a German N. C. O. came up to me and my driver and ordered us to proceed immediately. As no serious damage had been done to our truck, the driver steered it a little to one side and got on to the highway, and we went on. When we were passing the two covered trucks which had come up later I again smelled the horrible stench of dead bodies."

Sukhachev's testimony was confirmed by those of Vladimir Yegorov and Frol Maximovitch Yakovlev—Sokolov, both of whom had been serving in the police during the German occupation, the first as a policeman and second as chief of the Police of Katyn.

According to the statements of Yegorov, which the report of the Special Commission summarizes, he had, while guarding a bridge at the crossing of the Moscow-Minsk and Smolensk-Vitebsk highways at the end of March and the beginning of April 1943, seen on several occasions at night large trucks covered with tarpaulins, from which rose "a heavy stench of dead flesh." When he had reported his observations to his chief he had been advised "to hold his tongue" and told: "this does not concern us. We have no business to be mixing in German affairs."

Yakovlev-Sokolov, born in 1896, also said that he had seen early in April 1943 "four tarpaulin-covered trucks passing along the highway to Katyn forest. Several men armed with tommy guns and rifles rode in them. An acrid stench of flesh came from these trucks".

"From the above testimony" said the report of the Special Commission—"it can be concluded with all clarity that the Germans shot Poles in other places too. In bringing the bodies to the Katyn forest they pursued a triple object:

- "1. to destroy the traces of their own crimes;
- "2. to ascribe their own crimes to the Soviet Government;
- "3. to increase the number of 'victims of Bolshevism' in the Katyn Forest graves."

29. *The reaction of the local population to the German "Katyn provocation."*

The Report stated that after completing all the preparatory work on the Katyn graves the German had launched "a wide campaign in the Press and over the radio in an attempt to ascribe to the Soviet Power atrocities they themselves had committed against Polish war prisoners. As one method of provocation agitation, the Germans arranged visits to the Katyn graves by residents of Smolensk and its suburbs as well as 'delegations' from countries occupied by the Germans invaders of their vassals."

The Special Commission did not fail to interrogate a number of persons who had taken part in the "excursions" to the Katyn Graves. All of them had agreed, allegedly, that the clothing of the bodies, the metal parts of the clothing, the footwear, as well as the bodies themselves had been in a good state of preservation.

The Report of the Special Commission quoted an excerpt from a statement made by a specially qualified witness, former Medico-Legal Expert in Smolensk, a pathologist, Zhukov, who confirmed that "the clothing of the bodies, particularly the greatcoats, boots and belts, were in a good state of preservation. The metal parts of the clothing—belt buckles, hooks and spikes on shoe soles etc.—were not heavily rusted, and in some cases the metal still retained its polish. Sections of the skin of the bodies which could be seen—faces, necks, arms—were chiefly a dirty green color, and in some cases dirty brown, but there was no complete disintegration of the tissues, no putrefaction. In some cases bared tendons of whitish color and parts of muscles could be seen.

"While I was at the excavations people were at work sorting and extracting bodies at the bottom of a big pit. For this purpose they used spades and other tools, and also took hold of bodies with their hands and dragged them from place to place by the arms, the legs, or the clothing. I did not see a single case of bodies falling apart or of any member being torn off."

Taking into consideration all these direct observations the expert Soviet doctor visiting the Katyn graves had reached the conclusion that "the mass shooting of the Poles had taken place about a year and a half ago, and could have occurred in the Autumn of 1941 or in the Spring of 1942. As a result of my visit to the excavation site I became firmly convinced that a monstrous crime had been committed by the Germans."

While not doubting this expert opinion, one may be allowed to express astonishment that he made no mention of those bodies in the Katyn graves which had been added later, in fact barely a few weeks prior to their "official" discovery, when—according to the Report of the Soviet Commission, they had been brought by trucks from other places.

Being present when the graves were opened "in April 1943," a pathologist and medico-legal expert could hardly have failed to notice that they contained bodies which had not been originally buried in them, but had been added at a later date. Neither could he have passed this observation over in silence when making his deposition to the Special Commission.

"The 'excursions',"—said the last chapter of the Report of the Special Commission—"organised by the Germans failed to achieve their aim. All who visited the graves saw for themselves that they were confronted with the crudest and most obvious German-Fascist frame-up. The German authorities accordingly took steps to make the doubters keep quiet. The Special Commission heard the testimony of a great number of witnesses who related how the German authorities persecuted those who doubted or disbelieved the provocation. These doubters were discharged from work, arrested, threatened with shooting.

"The Commission established that in two cases people were shot for failure to 'hold their tongues'. Such reprisals were taken against the former German policeman Zagainev and against Yegorov, who worked on the excavation of the graves in Katyn Forest."

After mentioning two names of witnesses who had made statements concerning the German persecution of people who expressed their doubts after visiting the graves in the Katyn Forest, the Report quoted an excerpt from a statement made by Yakovlev-Sokolov, former Chief of the Katyn Police during the German occupation. This man testified that owing to the reaction of the local population after visiting the graves "a situation arose which caused serious alarm in the German Commandant's Office, and the police organs in the periphery were given urgent instruction to nip in the bud all harmful talk at any price, and arrest all persons who expressed disbelief in the 'Katyn Affair'."

The witness said that he had himself, as Chief of the police in the execution of these German instructions "ordered the police to detain and bring to the police station anyone who expressed disbelief or doubted the truth of German reports

about the shooting of Polish war prisoners by the Bolsheviks." Now, however, Soviet authority, having been restored, he was able to confess sincerely that "in fulfilling these instructions of the German authorities I clearly acted against my conscience, as I myself was certain that the 'Katyn Affair' was a German frame-up. I became finally convinced of that when I myself made an 'excursion' to Katyn Forest."

The Report continued:

"Seeing that the Summer of 1943 'excursions' of the local population to the Katyn graves did not achieve their purpose, the German excavation authorities ordered the graves to be filled in. Before their retreat from Smolensk they began hastily to cover up the traces of their crimes. The country house occupied by the 'H. Q. of the 537th Building Battalion' was burned to the ground."

It said that the Germans had searched for other witnesses—who had subsequently testified to the Soviet Special Commission—but that they had failed to catch them. "The German-Fascist invaders did not succeed in covering up the traces of or concealing their crime"—concludes the Report of the Special Commission. The genuine depositions of witnesses who escaped the Germans, the medico-legal experts' investigation, the fresh exhumation of the bodies and other proofs accumulated by the Soviet Special Commission, permitted the Russians to establish the Soviet "truth about Katyn". They "proved irrefutably that the Polish war prisoners were shot by the Germans themselves."

30. *Soviet Medico-Legal Experts' Investigation.*

The protocol of the Soviet Medico-Legal Experts' Investigation, attached to the report of the Special Commission, established that the exhumation and medico-legal examination of the Katyn bodies carried out by the above-mentioned experts (See page 345-6) took place in the Katyn forest in the period 16th-23rd January, 1944, with the aim of discovering:

- a. the identity of the dead,
- b. causes of death,
- c. time of burial.

On the basis of the results of the medico-legal examination of the bodies the Commission of medico-legal experts arrived at the following conclusions:

1. that victims were mostly Polish war prisoners; the number of bodies in civilian clothing, in relation to the total number of bodies examined, was insignificant, in all two out of 925 exhumed bodies;
2. that the clothing on the bodies of the war prisoners showed that they were officers, and included some privates of the Polish Forces. The ratio of officers' bodies to the bodies of privates was not given;
3. that the fabric of the clothes, especially of greatcoats, uniforms, trousers and tunics, was in a good state of preservation and could "be torn off with the hands only with great difficulty";¹
4. that the condition of the clothes on the bodies—namely the fact that uniform jackets, shirts, belts, trousers and underwear were buttoned up, boots or shoes were on the feet, scarves and ties tied round the necks, suspenders attached, shirts tucked in, testified that no external examination of the bodies and extremities of the bodies had been effected previously.
5. that although on the whole the clothing on the bodies bore traces of them having been searched, (slit pockets, turned and torn pockets, etc.) yet "in some cases whole pockets were found during examination of the clothing, scraps of newspapers, prayer books, pocket books, postage stamps, postcards and letters, receipts, notes and other documents, as well as articles of value (a gold nugget, dollars). Pipes, pocket knives, cigarette papers, handkerchiefs and other articles were found in these pockets as well as in the turned-out and torn pockets, under the lining in the belts of the coats, in footwear and socks."

The Soviet Commission of Experts found that the fact that valuable articles and documents were found on the bodies proves "that the German-Fascist authorities who undertook "a search of the bodies in the Spring-Summer season of 1943, did not do it thoroughly."

It should be emphasised that the Soviet medico-legal expert did not take into consideration the fact that according to the Report—the Katyn bodies had been searched, prior to their exhumation in January 1944, not once, but twice; the first time in March 1943 and the second time in April and May 1943.

¹ This statement of the Soviet Experts' Commission is interesting if we remember that, according to the Russian version, Polish officers were taken to three "special" camps near Smolensk in April 1940 where they were supported to have been working on road construction until September 1941. As a result of heavy manual labour, their uniforms must have undergone extensive wear and the fabric would not therefore have been well preserved.

The first search was supposed to have been carried out by Soviet prisoners of war under the supervision of German officers. We have no data concerning this search. From the report of the Soviet Special Commission we only learn that it took about a month, that it was carried out, by 500 specially selected diggers, who had been given very strict instructions to search thoroughly the bodies.

The second search—as described in German “Amtliches Material”—was at first carried out by Russian civilian workers under the supervision of German authorities, and subsequently under the supervision and with the participation of the professional team of the Polish Red Cross. It was carried out systematically, as testified to by the comparatively slow rate of exhumation and inspection of the seven Katyn graves. The inspection lasted for 68 days with a maximum daily exhumation and inspection of 100–120 bodies and a daily average of 61 bodies (see above, page 312).

The articles found during the second search had been carefully listed and placed in special bags provided with the file numbers of the bodies. The articles found during the exhumation of the bodies in April–May 1943 were inspected by thousands of people and photographs of many of them circulated all over the world. The German Amtliches Material, which published lists of the bodies found in Katyn, some 70 per cent of which were identified, appended lists of articles found on each body.

The exhumation carried out by the Soviet authorities in January 1944, and the search and medico-legal examinations of the bodies lasted for eight days. 925 bodies were exhumed—i. e. the daily average was 115. Considering that the Soviet exhumation took place in conditions far less favourable than those of the German exhumation (frozen ground, much shorter days, wintery weather) it must be agreed that the daily average achieved by them (115) which equals, or even exceeds the Germany daily maximum (100–120) was very high indeed. The speed with which the bodies were inspected must have been much greater than in April–May 1943. Obviously the technique of exhumation is far from easy and requires extensive experience and skill. In principle failure to detect small articles, especially when deeply hidden in the clothing of the bodies was quite possible and even likely, especially during the first stages of exhumation, before the personnel engaged in this task had acquired experience and practice.

Yet it appears from the official and unofficial data that during the Soviet inspection and examination not only numerous small articles but very many things including easily detectable articles, such as gold nuggets, gold dollars, penknives, pipes, prayer books and even—as described by the special correspondent of the Moscow-inspired “*Wolna Polska*”—medals and regimental colours were found on the bodies.¹

The failure to detect such articles during two examinations which lasted at least 68 days and (if we count the “unofficial examination” disclosed by the Soviet Report) possibly three months, would show inexcusable and, with regard to the professional team of the Polish Red Cross, most improbable carelessness on the part of the persons carrying out the examination. The material and documentary value of the articles found during the eight days of the Soviet examination would prove on the contrary, not only the extraordinary scrupulousness of the persons carrying out the search, but also their unusual skill in this kind of work—or possibly—their extraordinary luck. It should be emphasized that all the written documents listed in the appendix to the report of the Soviet Special Commission which proved “irrefutably” that the Katyn murders took place after June 1941, were found on the first hundred bodies exhumed by Soviet officials. No. 101 is the highest file number of the bodies mentioned in this list.

Neither the Report of the Special Commission nor the Protocol of the Medico-Legal Experts’ examination disclosed what method the Soviet authorities had used in the exhumation and search of the bodies. We do not know, either, whether and to what extent the bodies were identified. Nor do we know to what the file numbers of the bodies mentioned above, referred.

The Soviet authorities did not publish either a list of the exhumed bodies, or a complete inventory of all documents and articles found on them, during the Soviet examination, nor indeed the name of a single exhumed and identified body. The fact that they gave several file numbers of the bodies, on which especially important documents were found, does not permit us to identify these bodies or to relate in any way whatever the documents found on them by the Russians to the articles and written documents which had been removed from them by the Germans during the search.

¹ “One of them, wearing a Colonel’s uniform with Polish medals; on another his regimental standard—that of an artillery regiment—was found hidden on his breast.” (See *Wolna Polska* No. 5/45 dated 1.2.1944).

6. very small proportion of the bodies (20 out of 925) had the hands tied behind the back with woven cords.

7. that the lack of incisions on the skin of the head, breast or abdomens of most of the bodies proves that the Germans had carried out no medical-legal examinations of the "bodies". Out of 925 exhumed bodies incisions were found only on three bodies.

8. that detailed examination of the bodies proves the existence of bullet wounds on the head and neck, combined in four cases with injury to the bones of the cranium caused by a blunt hard heavy object; the entry orifices of the bullets led the Commission to conclude that the victims had been shot with fire arms, mostly of the 7.65 calibre, and to a smaller extent, with 9 mm. calibre; "the shots were fired from behind with the head bent forwards . . . The injuries inflicted by a blunt, hard heavy object found on the parietal bones of the cranium were concurrent with the bullet wounds of the head, and were not in themselves the cause of death."

These last three conclusions of the Soviet Expert Commission agreed in general with the facts as presented in the German Amtliches Material.

9. That a medico-legal examination of the bodies showed that they were not in a condition of decomposition but in the initial phase of desiccation and of formation of adipocere. Formation of adipocere was in an advanced phase in the bodies at the bottom of the graves. The limbs, trunks and internal organs had preserved their structure and almost normal colour and the brain its characteristic structural peculiarities.

10. That the properties of the soil in the place of discovery were of significance in the preservation of the bodies. As a result of the opening of the graves and the exposure of the bodies to the action of the warmth and moisture in the late Summer of 1943 a vigorous progress of decay could have resulted. But the good state of preservation of the muscles and internal organs as well as of the clothes gave grounds for affirming that the bodies had not remained in the earth for long.

Since it was believed that many of the bodies had been brought from elsewhere and put into the graves only nine months before to be subsequently exhumed and reburied by the Germans, the significance of the properties of the soil in the place of discovery can not have been so great as at first believed.¹ Moreover the medico-legal experts gave no explanation of why the action on them of warmth and moisture should have been so unusually mild.

11. That a comparison of the condition of the bodies in the grave on the territory of "Kose Gory" with the conditions of the bodies in the burial places in Smolensk and its environs admitted of the conclusion that the bodies of the Polish war prisoners had been buried at Kose Gory two years before, and that this was completely corroborated by the documents found in the clothes on the bodies. "Some of the documents found contain data referring to the period between November 12th 1940 and June 20th 1941." These documents which had not apparently had to be specially treated before becoming decipherable, proved to the satisfaction of the Commission that the victims had been alive at the outbreak of the Soviet-German war.

In their summing up of all this evidence the Commission of medico-legal experts concluded that the Polish war prisoners had been killed by shooting "about two years ago, i. e. between September and December of 1941."

It is rather surprising that the medico-legal experts made no mention either in the Protocol of their investigation or in the conclusion, based on the results of their expert examination of the bodies, of the total number of bodies found at "Kose Gory", especially in view of the fact that the Introduction to the Report as a whole indicated, that, the number as "calculated by the medico-legal experts is 11,000."

31. Documents found on the bodies.

In the Report the signatures of the medico-legal experts were placed at the end of their Conclusions and after them the Report listed the documents found by them on the bodies, which it considered were deserving of "special attention".

Of these there were nine in all, found on six bodies which were not identified by the Commission but only numbered.

By a strange coincidence although in all 925 bodies had been exhumed, according to the Report, the body bearing the highest number on which such documents had been found was No. 101. It may of course have been the case that all the

¹ These bodies having already been in a sufficiently advanced state of decay to give forth "a heavy stench of putrifying flesh", in March. (See above).

important documents from the Commissions point of view had been found in the hundred or so bodies lying in the upper layers of the graves.

These revealing documents were not listed in the Report in any particular order nor were they given as one might have expected, in the order of the numbers of the bodies on which they were found. Those body numbers were not listed in numerical order and, where more than one document had been found on the same body, it was listed as a separate item and not grouped with the other documents from the body, so that the same body number appeared several times in the list. This arrangement naturally makes the analysis of the documents unnecessarily difficult.

The analysis however, of the contents of the documents as given in the Report is very interesting. They fall into three groups:—

1. Letters.
2. Receipts.
3. An ikon.

1. Three letters were said to have been found:

a. A postcard stamped at Tarnopol on November 12th, 1940, bearing no text or address ("written text and address are discoloured.") Found on body No. 4.

b. A letter from Warsaw dated September 12th, 1940, addressed to the Central War Prisoners Bureau of the Red Cross, Moscow, and written by the wife of one Tomasz Zigon, enquiring after his whereabouts. This letter bore the stamp of Central Post Office, Moscow and an anonymous inscription in Russian: "Ascertain and forward for delivery, November 15th. 1940." Found on body No. 92.

c. An unmailed post card addressed to Warsaw by one Stanislaw Kuczinski and dated June 20th, 1941. Found on body No. 53.

2. Five receipts were found made out to two people and given by the Soviet Authorities.

a. Three were made out to one Araszkevicz. The first dated 16th December, 1939 for a gold watch, had been issued at Starobielsk camp. On the back it bore a note dated 25th March, 1941, stating that the watch had been sold to the Jewellery Trading Trust. It was not said whether this note had been signed.

The second was dated 6th April, 1941, issued at Camp 1, O. M., for an unknown sum of roubles. (In the Edition of the Report published in Polish the sum is given as 226 roubles).

The third was dated May 5th, 1941, issued at camp 1, O. M. for 102 roubles.

All three documents said to have been found on the same body, No. 46, were numbered on the list given in the Report as 4, 6 & 7.

b. Two receipts said to have been found on body No. 101 were made out to one Lewandowski. The first dated 19th December, 1939, issued at Kozielsk camp, was for a gold watch and bore a similar inscription on the back about the watch, having been sold to the Jewellery Trading Trust dated 14th March, 1941.

The second issued at camp, 1 O. N. on 15th May, 1941, was made out for 175 roubles. On the list these documents were numbered 3 and 8.

3. The paper "ikon".

The paper "ikon", with the image of Christ was said to have been found on body No. 71. This body was not identified in the Report, although care was taken to point out that the picture was found "between pages 144 and 145 of a Catholic prayer book." This "ikon" was said to have borne the inscription "Jadwiga" and the date 4th April, 1941. This date found on the paper "ikon" unrelated to anything except a womans name and therefore establishing nothing as to the date of death of the owner, hardly seems to have deserved the "special attention" accorded to it by the Commission.

In considering the list of documents as a whole, the following reflections spring to mind. The Soviet reaction to the Katyn Revelations was much concerned from first to last with the documents found on the bodies in the graves. Very early on they asserted that the documents which the Germans declared had been found in the graves had, in reality, been taken from the archives of the Gestapo and placed on the bodies by the Germans themselves.

The same accusation was brought against the Germans in the report of the Special Commission, namely in the testimony of Moskovskaya when she related how Yegorev had told her that "the Germans made the prisoners put into the pockets of the Polish officers some papers which they took from cases and suit-cases (I don't remember exactly) which they had brought along."

By giving so much prominence to the whole question of the documents found with the bodies, and stressing their belief that they had been planted by the Germans, the Russians to some extent, laid themselves open to the possibility of similar accusations being brought against themselves. In this connection it might well be pointed out that the documents found in the Spring of 1943 and inspected by the Polish professional team, the "International Commission" and many journalists and visitors, were mostly personal papers, photographs of which were published throughout the world. Those described by the Russian medico-legal experts were in no case personal documents and all but one (the "ikon") had either been issued by the Russian authorities themselves or had passed through their hands. They were moreover only made known to the public by the vague description of them found in the Report itself.

32. *Final conclusions of Special Soviet Commission.*

At the end of the Report of the Special Commission were put the conclusions which it considered, on the basis of the evidence presented to it, emerged "with irrefutable clarity." These conclusions were as follows:—

1. The Polish prisoners of war who were in the three camps West of Smolensk, and employed on road building before the outbreak of war, remained there after the German invaders reached Smolensk, until September 1941, inclusive.

2. In the Katyn Forest, in the Autumn of 1941, the German occupation authorities carried out mass shootings of Polish prisoners of war from the above-named camps.

3. The mass shootings of Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn Forest was carried out by a German military organisation hiding behind the conventional name "H. Q. of the 537th Engineering Battalion", which consisted of Oberst Leutnant Arnes, his assistant, Oberst Leutnant Rekst, and Lieutenant Hott.

4. In connection with the deterioration of the general military and political situation for Germany at the beginning of the year 1943, the German occupation authorities, with provocation aims, took a number of steps in order to ascribe their own crimes to the organs of the Soviet Power, calculating on setting Russians and Poles at loggerheads.

5. With this aim, (a) the German-Fascist invaders, using persuasion, attempts at bribery, threats and barbarous torture, tried to find witnesses among Soviet citizens, from whom they tried to extort false evidence alleging that the Polish prisoners of war had been shot by the organs of Soviet Power in the spring of 1940; (b) the German occupation authorities in the Spring of 1943 brought in from other districts bodies of Polish war prisoners whom they had shot and put them into the open graves in the Katyn Forest, calculating on covering up the traces of their own crimes, and on increasing the number of "victims of Bolshevik atrocities" in the Katyn Forest; (c) preparing for their provocation, the German occupation authorities started opening the graves in the Katyn Forest in order to take out documents and material evidence which exposed them, using for this work about 500 Russian prisoners of war who were shot by the Germans after the work was completed.

6. It has been established beyond doubt from the evidence of the medico-legal experts, that (a) the time of the shooting was the Autumn of 1941; (b) in shooting the Polish war prisoners the German hangmen applied the same method of pistol shots in the back of the head as they applied in the mass execution of Soviet citizens, in other towns, e. g., Orel, Voronezh, Krasnodar and Smolensk itself.

7. The conclusions drawn from the evidence given by witnesses, and from the shooting of Polish war prisoners by the Germans in the Autumn of 1941, are completely confirmed by the material evidence and documents excavated from the Katyn graves.

8. In shooting the Polish war prisoners in the Katyn Forest, the German-Fascist invaders consistently carried out their policy of physical extermination of the Slav peoples.

CONCLUSION. WILL THE MYSTERY OF KATYN EVER BE SOLVED?

33. *Katyn affair used for Russian propaganda.*

The conclusions set out in the final chapter of the Report of the Special Commission were regarded throughout the length and breadth of Soviet controlled territory as having cleared up the whole question of the Katyn murders. The Report of 24.1.44, was considered to have solved all the mysteries and dispelled

any doubts there may have been as to the fate of the "missing" Polish prisoners of war. All the Polish P. O. W.'s, both officers and men ("missing in the U. S. S. R.") were held, to have been without doubt, murdered by the Germans in the Autumn of 1941 and their bodies to be lying in the Katyn graves.

These convenient conclusions went unchallenged by the whole Soviet and pro-Soviet press and were also used for Soviet propaganda to encourage the soldiers fighting for Russia to fight yet harder against the Germans in order to take their "Revenge for Katyn". This propaganda was naturally directed particularly at the Red Polish Army organised by Berling on the Soviet side (see p. 278).

Side by side with the Report of the Special Commission, "Wolna Polska" the Moscow organ of the Union of Polish Patriots published a pathetic article by Wanda Wasilewska in which this Member of the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. wrote: "For the third time the Katyn graves have been opened. This time to reveal to all the world a terrible truth. To bear witness to one more German crime committed against the Polish people. The prisoners, helpless men, were murdered in cold blood, quietly, systematically shot by a revolver in the back of the head. Piled into a common grave were regular officers, engineers, doctors, more than 10,000 Polish intelligentsia who because of war had donned military uniform. . . .

"But our dead were once more touched by filthy German paws. The Germans dragged out of their graves the corpses of their victims and uttered throughout the whole world a base lie. By beating, torturing, and bribing their conjured up witnesses. . . . The Germans, their servants and accomplices, started to prey upon the corpses of the Polish officers. Out of one of the greatest tragedies of Poland they made a dirty, ignominious game; they transformed the blood of martyrs into a foul stream. . . .

"The blood of Katyn Forest implores us to revenge it, inexorably, mercilessly. Listen to that voice, Soldiers, of our Corps! Not for one moment may you be allowed to forget the horrible death of our brothers, brother soldiers, who were murdered as by brigands, who were driven helpless into the pits that were to be their graves, who were shoved into a common ditch who were afterwards dragged out of the grave in the same way as dead bodies are dragged about by jackals and hyenas and preyed upon the same way as hyenas and jackals prey upon corpses. When you go to the West, when you strike the enemy in the chest, don't forget to add 'For Katyn.'"

On 30.1.1944, shortly after the publication of the Report of the Special Commission, a religious service and a great parade of the Red Polish troops were held at the Katyn cemetery. The priest, one Kubsz, who celebrated the Mass declared in his sermon that the immediate cause of the murders was the conclusion in July 1941 of the Polish-Soviet Pact which proclaimed the rebirth of the Polish Army. He besought the Lord to "fill our hearts with undying hatred of the enemy, unlimited courage, and daring in the fight for the liberation of our beloved Fatherland."

The Commander of Corps, the former Polish Lt. Col. Berling, in his speech at the parade declared:

"Our inexorable foe—the German,—wishes to destroy our whole nation because he desires to seize our land. The earth on which we Poles have, for centuries, lived. That is why the Germans destroy and murder our brothers in Poland. . . . That is why they murdered here in Katyn forest the Polish officers and men. The blood of our brothers which was spilled in this forest, cries out for revenge.—

"Now we have arms in our hands, arms given to us by a friendly neighbour—ally, by the Soviet Union. We must use these arms to liberate our oppressed Fatherland and to revenge the unheard of crime committed here by the Germans. Remember men and officers, remember the voices of our murdered brothers which call to us. We must answer this call."

The Deputy Commander of the Corps, Major A. Zavadzki, a Soviet citizen and for many years an officer of N. K. V. D. troops,¹ proclaimed:

"Here in a vast common grave lie 11,000 of our countrymen, officers and men of the Polish Army. Here was murdered by the Hitlerites the flower of our nation. They were murdered because they were Poles. . . . We are grateful to the Soviet Union for investigating this whole affair, for elucidating this truth about which we were not in doubt but which is now irrefutably proved. With arms in our hands we will return home and we will return proclaiming the truth of the awful Hitlerite crime."

"Let the blood of our murdered brothers kindle in our hearts, hatred of the enemy, the German. We will be, in the fight, unyielding, fearless and we shall

¹ Zavadzki now in Poland is a General and Governor of Silesia.

not rest until the ashes of the victims of this murder will be taken to their Fatherland with full honours. Let the crime committed here enforce once more our wish and decision to fight a deadly fight with the enemy. To go and be victorious."

Speeches of this kind were repeated at meetings over and over again during a campaign which was organised throughout the whole Soviet Union and during the course of which money was collected for the formation of a column of tanks to be called "Revenger of Katyn". This propaganda was not limited to Poles deported some years before to Russia, but was also directed at Soviet citizens in general and the Red Army in particular.

According to the *Wolna Polska* No. 7/48, a large boarding was put up by the road side of the much frequented Smolensk-Vitebsk road leading to the front, just at the point where the path to the "tragic forest" branched off, which said, in Russian:

"Here in Katyn Forest in the Autumn of 1941 the Hitlerite scoundrels have shot 11,000 Polish prisoners of war, men and officers. Warriors of the Red Army revenge them."

34. Attitude of Western public opinion to the conclusions of the Soviet Report.

The conclusions of the Report of the Special Commission which were accepted as being the whole truth about Katyn in Soviet Russia and the countries in her sphere of influence, were received with much more reserve by the Western Powers. The results of the Soviet investigations were published in nearly all the British and American papers as early as 25.1.44. The papers, however, carrying at the same time, the news that the Soviets had rejected the American offer of mediation to bring about the renewal of the Polish-Soviet talks and Mr. Eden's declaration that His Majesty's Government would not recognise any territorial changes made during the course of the war, mostly confined themselves to describing the Report and its conclusions without accepting or rejecting them.

Apart from the Communist papers which adopted the Soviet attitude towards the Report, the "News Chronicle" was the only one of the London dailies which, in an Editorial on 28.1.44 assuring the Polish Government that by accepting the conclusions of the Report they would make the solution of the Soviet-Polish conflict more possible can be said to have taken a definite line. This Liberal paper did not at that time know of the creation by the Communists in Warsaw, on the night of January 1st, 1944, of the so-called Home National Council which intended to become a rival political centre to the legal Polish Government,¹ and therefore took the Tass communiqué of 17.1.44 quite seriously when it said that only the position taken by the Polish Government over the Katyn affair prevented the resumption of normal friendly relations by the two governments (See above page 341).

Independent and detached, opinion in Britain found expression in the *Spectator* which wrote in the number published on January 28th, 1944, that the conclusions of the Report of the Soviet Commission could be neither accepted nor rejected without careful and cool examination of all the proofs on which they were based. As such careful and impartial examination of the proofs was clearly impossible, the British Press in general forbore to comment on it and maintained a reserved silence.

Despite, or perhaps because of the efforts of the Soviet censorship, the few reports written by the Anglo-Saxon journalists who had visited Katyn did not make a strong impression. They mostly confined themselves to accounts of the facts and conclusions set out in the Soviet Report and they betrayed a certain amount of insincerity in content and clumsiness in construction, unexpected in articles by journalists of that standing.

The silence that followed the initial reactions to the publication of the Soviet explanation lasted unbroken until in January 1945, W. L. White published in the U. S. A. his book "Report on the Russians". In this book he dared publicly to raise the question of the murder of the Polish officers and he did this significantly enough in connection with his remarks about the working of the Soviet censorship.

After stating that—

"Russia has the most rigid political censorship in the civilised world".

he referred to talks he had had with the foreign correspondents in Moscow, the same correspondents who had visited Katyn.

He quoted their opinion—

"the most severe political censorship was imposed on their stories of the Katyn Forest Massacre" and

¹ H. N. C. was afterwards joined by the Union of Polish Patriots and still exists in place of the Polish Parliament, the President being Mr. Bierut.

and emphasizing that these correspondents

"trained observers—believed even before they went (to Katyn) that the Germans had done the killing" added:

"even so, Moscow censorship struck out all the qualifying phrases". He gave the following examples of such censorship:—

"If a reporter would write '*I am not a medical expert but doctors say* the condition of these bodies prove they were murdered by the Germans', the censorship would strike out the qualifying phrase . . . leaving only the bare charge.

"Also stricken out were all phases indicating any doubt in the correspondents minds—such as words 'in my opinion' 'probably' or 'evidence we were shown would tend to prove' with the result that the stories as received in America were as firmly damning of the Germans as Pravda's editorials." (Page 134).

Probably White talked over the Katyn Affair at some length with the foreign correspondents but whether he did so or not, in his opinion the conclusions put forward in the Soviet Report were not completely convincing. It was nearly a year after the publication of this Report when he wrote in his book that "the Katyn Forest Massacre, which . . . subject is one of the most delicate of the war strung around a plot as exciting as any detective 'who-done-it'." (Page 127.)

"Katyn Forest is near Smolensk and it is the grave of some 10,000 Poles, mostly officers, who were shot in the back of the head. On these facts everyone agrees. But on whether this slaughter of helpless war prisoners was done by Russians or Germans there is violent disagreement and some evidence both ways." (Page 128).

35. Difficulties of solving the Katyn mystery.

Mr. White, it may be said, somewhat under-estimated the situation when he said that the "violent disagreement" over the Katyn Affair was limited to the question of "who done it", Russians or Germans. Undoubtedly the question of who did it is the most important one but there are other disputable questions more or less connected with it. These are firstly, the question of the date of the murder, secondly the question of the method of the murder, thirdly the question of the object of the murder, fourthly the question of the number of victims involved in the murder, etc. On the question of numbers of victims, in spite of White's assertion to the contrary, there is no common agreement. It is true that the Soviets after many contradictory declarations and denials in the end accepted the thesis put forward from the very beginning by the German propaganda that there were in the Katyn graves more than 10,000 bodies but, as is shown above, PART THREE, (Pages 322–329), these figures cannot be correct as the graves themselves could not, in fact, have held such a large number of bodies.

Assuming therefore that in the Katyn Affair only one fact can be taken as certain, namely, that of the finding in the Katyn Forest, of a number of the bodies of the Polish officers who were missing in the U. S. S. R., let us now try on the basis of the material presented in these notes to make our contribution to the unravelling of the whole Katyn mystery. The question of who was responsible for the massacre will undoubtedly remain the most fundamental one but, in order to reach a definite decision on this point, it may be helpful to elucidate some of the other obscure problems connected with it.

In our attempt to solve the problem of who committed the murders, we must from the start, realise that it is not possible to identify individual murderers. There were certainly many of them acting on orders issued to them from above and originating with the competent state authorities, either Russian or German. That these orders were issued by one or other of these two state authorities is indisputable, all the possibilities are excluded.

The possibility that such orders could have been given by the Russian authorities was accepted at the time of the Katyn Revelations in many quarters. G. Westin Silverstolpe published in 1943 a series of articles in the Swedish journal "Nu" in which he adopted a particularly critical attitude to the German thesis about the discovery of the graves but nevertheless, in replying in one of these articles to a letter of the distinguished Finnish historian Dr. Hornborg, he did not, theoretically, exclude the possibility of Russian guilt as he wrote "In my opinion it (Russian guilt) is quite possible. I have no doubt that the Russians are quite capable of murder en masse with the object of exterminating the upper classes of the nation which they desire to subject and render defenceless."

Further the President of the executive Committee of the British Labour Party, Professor Harold Laski, did not at that time exclude the possibility of Russian responsibility for the massacre. He wrote in Reynolds News of 2.5.43.

"The Russians are capable of ghastly blunders as the executions of Alter and Erlich show, but I should want better evidence than a Nazi statement before I

accepted the possibility that they could be guilty of so grim a horror, so certain to leave ineffaceable memories."

Leaving aside all irrelevant factors, in particular the fact that the two accused Powers were fighting on opposite sides, we shall start by assuming that it was equally possible for the murders to have been committed either by the Germans or by the Russian authorities. There is however one further preliminary observation to be made, namely, that the material evidence of the crime,—Katyn Forest, the graves, the corpses of the victims, and the objects and documents found with them, etc.—have always been and still are in the exclusive possession of the authorities of the States accused of the crime. Because of the attitude taken by the Russians to the proposed investigation of the International Red Cross, the material evidence was never made accessible to a completely impartial and independent body with the result that we are dealing only with written descriptions of the actual evidence which themselves emanate from either one or other of the accused Powers. These descriptions, if not directly published by the German or Russian authorities, have come from the reports of neutral observers or Anglo-Saxon journalists and have therefore been submitted to the censorship control or influence of one of the Great Powers concerned.

This means that in attempting to solve the Katyn mystery we must treat the evidence with great caution and considerable scepticism. Having based our enquiry on the supposition that there is an equal probability of the murders having been committed either by the Germans or by the Russians, it is necessary to realise that the evidence emanating from either side will be only such as to exonerate the one and exculpate the other. Moreover as the evidence was used by both sides for propaganda purposes, the documents concerned were naturally adapted to this end. Therefore, only a very thorough analysis of them involving a careful comparison and a critical attention to detail, can reveal the gaps in evidence and make it possible to fill them, while setting aside the more or less evident falsehoods incorporated to establish for propaganda purposes the innocence of the interested party and the guilt of the other.

The evidence produced by both sides will therefore be subject to the same measure of distrust and consideration will not be given to the fact that the German censorship was or appears to have been less severe than the Russian, that the Germans made it possible for a much greater number of people to inspect the graves and their contents than did the Russians that the Germans organised an investigation by at least a quasi neutral "European" Commission etc. etc. Appropos of this last point, W. L. White remarked that "if the German Commission was a 90% Axis party, the Russian Commission was a 100% Soviet picnic" and in doing so he probably rather overestimated the German influence over the Commission.

It is furthermore imperative, in attempting to discover the real truth, to work only on the basis of the material evidence, and to resist the suggestive effects of the distinguished names, used by both sides, to establish the genuineness of the evidence presented by them. G. W. Silverstolpe in an article in "Nu" (No. 31) severely criticising the Protocol of the so called "European Committee of Experts," signed by a dozen Professors of Medicine of European universities, wrote: "In these days the title of Doctor and Professor is a poor guarantee of scientific objectivity and resistance to influence." Accepting this statement as true we must adopt a similar attitude with regard to academicians, world famous authors, and bishops. The authority of their names must not be allowed, by itself, to give authenticity to the facts or support to the arguments set out in documents bearing their signatures.

36. Number of Polish officers in Soviet captivity in April 1940.

Up till the time of the commencement of the liquidation by the Soviets of the three P. O. W. camps at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in April 1940, we have comparatively detailed information about the fate of the officers confined in them. This information comes from letters written to their families, notes and diaries kept by them and evidence supplied by about 400 of their fellow prisoners who were not "missing" but "found" in August 1941 in the camp at Giasovietz. (See Chapter VI.) From this evidence it is apparent that the number of people afterwards found was barely 3% of the whole population of the three camps, it therefore follows that more than 97% of the total number of prisoners in the camps were "missing." It was however, very difficult to establish the exact number of "missing" prisoners, officers and men, and even more difficult to draw up detailed lists of their names. Despite the fact that detailed records of every prisoner in each camp were made by the Soviet authorities and that their names were many times listed for different purposes as is known from the evidence given by all those

who were later "found," and in spite also of the repeated requests, made by the representatives of the Polish Government from May 1941, to April 1943, the Soviet authorities at no time, either before or after the Katyn Revelations, published a list of the names of Polish officers in Soviet captivity or divulged the total numbers or indicated the exact number held in each camp.

Although on 17.9.40 Red Star published two articles from which it appeared that the total number of Polish officers captured by the Soviets was more than 10,000 (see page 14)—not counting those people afterwards arrested by the occupying Authorities as being officers,—in August 1941 the Soviet representatives gave the total number as being about 1,000, (see page 143) without in any way attempting to explain the great divergence in the totals. During the prolonged negotiations, described in PART TWO of these notes, they confined themselves to querying the numbers quoted by the Polish representatives (see pages 170 and 171) but did not themselves give any definite number, nor did they keep the promises given by them many times to the Polish Authorities of handing over a list of names of the officers still in captivity. On the contrary they several times demanded such lists from the Poles. (See pages 172 and 178.)

Lists containing about 5,000 names were in fact, put into Stalin's hands on 3.12.41 and 18.3.42 (See pages 191 and 211), but this action produced no statement about the numbers involved from the Soviet side. During the final conversation on the subject of the "missing" prisoners, held on 8.7.42., Vyshinsky categorically denied that the Soviets had in their possession any list of names of prisoners from the respective camps in spite of the fact that there is plenty of evidence to prove that such lists were many times compiled. (See page 222.)

When the Germans issued their first communiqué about the Katyn discoveries on 13.4.43 they gave the total number of Katyn victims as more than 10,000, this number being obviously based on the figures published in the articles in Red Star. The Soviets at first denied the truth of those figures declaring, in accordance with Vyshinsky's remarks in his conversation with Kot, that that number of Polish officers had never been in Soviet captivity. A very characteristic example of the position taken by Soviet representatives at that time is found in the remarks made by Major Paul Baraev, Deputy Soviet Military Attaché in Washington on 23.4.43, when he referred en passant to the recent Katyn Revelations and expressed the opinion that the arguments put forth by German propaganda that 10,000 officers had been murdered in one month were so improbable that no intelligent man could believe in statements of that kind. He also said that the number of 10,000 was probably a gross exaggeration and that in his opinion there had been no more than 2,000 Polish officers in Soviet captivity and that all those had been in due course released.

The first Soviet Communiqué of 15.4.43 made no mention of the number of Polish prisoners of war which it was said had fallen into German hands (see page 247). The second one, of 18.4.43, referred generally to "some" and "a certain number" and no figures were given in the Soviet Press at that time. But, when the Report of the Special Soviet Commission of 24.1.44 mentioned en passant, that "the total number of bodies, as calculated by the medico-legal experts, is 11,000," that number was officially accepted by the Soviet authorities and used by them in their propaganda¹ as the total number of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men, without any reference to the relative numbers of each, who had fallen into German hands and had afterwards been killed by them.

Since the Soviet authorities who alone were in possession of the exact number and categories of Polish prisoners who were in Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov in the spring of 1940 refrained, for one reason or another from publishing this information but instead finally accepted the figure of 11,000 as the total number of Polish P. O. W's., both officers and men, who were supposed to have been "missing" since the spring of 1940 somewhere in the territory of the U. S. S. R., we can accept as correct the relatively precise figures calculated in the basis of the evidence given by those prisoners who were afterwards "found".

In early April, 1940, there were in—

Kozielsk Camp 4,500 P. O. W's, of that number 4,225 were "missing".

Starobielsk Camp—3,920 P. O. W's of that number 3,841 were "missing".

Ostashkov Camp—6,500 P. O. W's of which about 400 were officers, of that number 6,376 were "missing".

The total number was therefore 14,920 P. O. W's (about 8,700 officers) of which 14,472 were "missing".

¹ There is no mention in the Protocol or in the Conclusions of the Medico-legal expert of the basis or of the manner in which this calculation was made by them, neither does the actual figure of 11,000 appear in these documents.

In addition to these total figures a relatively accurate list of names was drawn up from the evidence given by the "found" prisoners, and the depositions of relatives of the prisoners in the camps who were corresponding with them until April, 1940. This list contains up to the present time more than 8,000 names of people, mostly officers, who in early April, 1940, had been in these camps and subsequently "missing". As this material comes from a source independent of the influence of either of the Powers accused of the murders, we need not dread it with the reservation that we spoke of in page 35, above. Further, this material—the evidence of the witnesses and the list of the missing prisoners from each of the camps compiled from it—may be used to test the authenticity of the other material originating from more suspect sources.

36. *Diaries of the missing prisoners. Table of Convoys.*

This test was applied in the first instance to the diaries of the missing prisoners. The German documents mentioned that such diaries and notes were found on the bodies and in fact, copies of some of them reached London through the Polish Underground Movement.

These documents as well as all the others produced by the Germans in connection with the Katyn Affair, were at first regarded with considerable scepticism as it was realised that they might very well have been faked for use as political propaganda. But close analysis of their contents and a comparison of the facts given in them with the evidence of living witnesses from Kozielsk camp dispelled all suspicions as to their genuineness. The entries in the diaries, made mostly day by day, contained too many descriptions of the small details of everyday life in the camp for them to have been faked, more especially as events were mentioned about which no-one who had not been in the camp at the time they took place could have had any knowledge. As one of many such samples can be given the entry of 28.11.39, in the diary of a Major Solski (see page 64-65) which said "In the morning we decided to buy stamps and send a letter for Capt. Dr. Kosinsky Jerzy Dyonizowicz who had sent to Pniewy a letter to Fraulein Dorota Pyzalok Pniewy, Deutschland, Posener Provinz, Posener Strasse 7." The reason for putting an entry of this kind in his diary is not readily apparent but from the evidence of Witness No. 39, we learnt that there was among the prisoners at Kozielsk a Dr. Kosinski who declared himself publicly to be an enthusiastic believer in Hitler and Germans in general and who was also very amenable to Russian authority. His behaviour so exasperated his fellow prisoners that he was made the object of various forms of hostile attention. The reason for Solski mentioning the letter in his diary only becomes plain when in the light of the evidence provided by people who had first hand knowledge of the circumstances that provoked it. When we are aware of these circumstances the use of the word "Fraulein" as well as of the German geographical names for Polish places and of the fathers name in the Russian fashion, become easy to understand.

These written documents, giving in many instances data more precise than those that living witnesses were able to supply from memory threw more light on the history of events at Kozielsk camp and in particular made it possible to draw up a comparatively accurate table of the convoys which left Kozielsk when it was liquidated with dates of departure, numbers of people in each convoy and some names of individuals that left in them.

As the Soviet authorities who had in their possession precise details of all these matters did not, in fact, publish them and as the Report of the Special Commission gave no particulars about when, how and under what circumstances the Polish prisoners of war who were removed from the three camps found themselves in the Smolensk area, we are bound to accept as approximately correct the table of convoys which departed from Kozielsk given above. (see page 49).

Some of the evidence given by witnesses interrogated by the Germans and published in the Amtliches Material indicated that the convoys from Kozielsk began to arrive at Gnezdovo station in March 1940 namely that of Krivosertsev (page 301), Andrejev (page 302) and Zakharov (page 304). As this data is in contradiction to the verbal evidence given by the Polish witnesses and of the written diaries, we must discard it as being untrue. However it is necessary to note that in the evidence given by Silverstrov (page 303) the correct dates were given namely, April and May 1940 and that most of the witnesses as quoted in Amtliches Material, gave evidence that was in general accordance with the table of convoys in that the period during which the prisoners were said to have arrived at Gnezdovo lasted for four to five weeks. (Kisselev, p. 302, Silverstrov, p. 304. Zakharov, p. 305). We must however regard the statements of two of them, i. e. Krivosertsev—a member of the German Civil Guard (p. 301) and Andrejev (p. 302) about the alleged arrival at Gnezdovo of three or four convoys of Polish

prisoners of war every day, as being untrue and made in order to give grounds for the German assertions about the enormous number of Katyn victims. The absence of similar data with regard to the camps of Starobielsk and Ostashkov makes it unfortunately impossible to obtain such accurate information about the departure of convoys from those two camps.

37. What was the destination of the convoys from the three big camps—Number of P. O. W.'s taken to Gnezdovo.

The German evidence nowhere referred to the arrival at Gnezdovo of prisoners from Starbielsk or Ostashkov but mentioned Kozielsk many times. (The first communique of 13.4.43., evidence of Zakharov pages 304, 289, 295 etc).

The fact that the prisoners who were unloaded at Gnezdovo came from Kozielsk was also confirmed by the contents of the written documents (see pages 64-67) and the evidence of witnesses (see pages 69, 70, 71, 73) and it is therefore possible to accept as an established fact that all the 19 convoys that left Kozielsk with the exception of the two that left on 26.4.40 and 12.5.40 which were directed to Pavlishtchev Bor, were sent to Gnezdovo and were unloaded there. There was absolutely no mention of the convoys from Starobielsk or Ostashkov being directed to Gnezdovo, either in statements of witnesses or in any written document. The former prisoners from Starobielsk afterwards found at Griazovietz mentioned, while giving evidence, that Kharkov had possibly been the place where the convoys from that camp were unloaded (page 96). Former prisoners from Ostashkov gave evidence to the effect that they had lost touch with the rest of their convoy at Viasma or Bologoye (page 109).

The Soviet documents also contained no definite statements about the direction taken by any or all of the transports from the three big camps or if some of them having gone through Smolensk to Gnezdovo station. It is true that the Report of the Special Commission quoted the evidence of witnesses Ivanov and Savvateyev to the effect that in the spring of 1940 "several" train loads of Polish prisoners arrived at Gnezdovo station (see pages 382-383) and that the text of the Report referred to Gnezdovo as "the station at which Polish prisoners arrived in spring 1940" but it gave neither the exact date of the arrival of these convoys nor mentioned the place they had come from nor the numbers involved.

From the fact that the Soviet authorities finally accepted the total of 11,000 of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men as allegedly lying in the Katyn graves and from the fact that the Report maintained that there existed a similar number, namely, three, special camps in the Smolensk area it would perhaps be possible to arrive at the conclusion in a very roundabout way, that all the convoys from the three big camps, with the exception of those that went direct to Pavlishtchev Bor, were sent through Smolensk and were actually unloaded at Gnezdovo. There does not however seem to be sufficient evidence in support of this conclusion in the material made available by either side.

We are therefore brought to the conclusion on the basis of the evidence so far made available that:—

1. All the convoys (except two) that left Kozielsk camp in April and May were sent to Gnezdovo and there unloaded.

2. The convoys that left the camps at Starobielsk and Ostashkov at the same time were not sent to Gnezdovo and that no information about their destination and the place where they were unloaded was published by either side.

These conclusions settle the question of the numbers of Polish prisoners of war taken in the spring of 1940 to Gnezdovo station and unloaded there. If we accept the total number of prisoners in Kozielsk camp as having been 4,500 and exclude the 245 people sent to Pavlishtchev Bor we can be fairly certain that at various dates during April and May 1940 there were unloaded at Gnezdovo altogether about 4255 Polish prisoners of war.

38. Methods by which the Prisoners of War were transported after detained at Gnezdovo and their destination.

The witnesses Krivosertsev (pp. 301, 306) Andreyev (p. 301) and Silvestrov (pp. 303-304) whose depositions are quoted in the German Amt. Material described how the Polish prisoners of war were unloaded from prison trucks at Gnezdovo and put into lorries of the kind commonly known in the U. S. S. R. as "Tchorny voron" and were then driven off in the direction of the place called Kose Gory. This evidence was partially confirmed by one of the former prisoners from Kozielsk, subsequently found in the U. S. S. R., who himself confined in a prison truck at Gnezdovo station, saw his fellow prisoners being unloaded into a "bus with its windows smeared with cement". This bus held about thirty

people and drove off, to return after about half an hour for the next batch (see page 71). We can therefore assume that the place to which the prisoners were driven was not very far from Gnezdovo station. The place called Kose Gory, mentioned in Amtliches Material, $1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 miles (from Gnezdovo station, (see page 308).

The Soviet Report says nothing about the method of transport or the destination of the prisoners after leaving Gnezdovo but three special camps are mentioned in which prisoners of war working on the roads were put which were said to have been lying 15-25 miles west of Smolensk.

Gnezdovo station is about 8 miles and Kose Gory about 9-10 miles West of Smolensk so that if we take the facts stated in the Soviet Report as being correct, the camp nearest to Smolensk would have been about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Gnezdovo and it could not therefore have been at the place called Kose Gory. To transport a party of prisoners to a place $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Gnezdovo and return for the next batch in thirty minutes would not be impossible but it would entail very rapid driving. It would however have been quite easy to get to Kose Gory and back in that time.

The German and the Russian material therefore differs as to the destination of the prisoners who left Gnezdovo and the statement of the Polish witness gives no definite clue to it. The written evidence of Major Solski's diary describes how the prisoners had been taken under very unpleasant conditions in a "prison coach in cells," somewhere into a wood, something like a country house. This very short description of the place to which the prisoners were driven corresponds topographically to the place called Kose Gory but the absence of a more detailed description of the place and also of any information as to the distances driven and the speed of the bus makes it impossible to determine the destination of the prisoners exactly. From the entries in Major Solski's diary we only know that the prisoners were awakened in the prison trucks some minutes before 5 a. m. and that at 6:30 a. m., they were already in a wood and relieved of their watches. We do not know if he was in the first batch of prisoners to leave the station.

There is one further fact that should be taken into consideration, namely, that two railway lines run West of Smolensk, one to Vitebsk and the other to Orska (Gussino) along which there are many small stations and the question, therefore arises of why the prisoners destined for special camps 15-25 miles West of Smolensk were unloaded at Gnezdovo instead of somewhere further down the line e. g. Katyn, Kuprino, etc. The Report of the Soviet Commission gives no answer to this question.

39. *What happened to the prisoners when they left the lorries.*

From the rather vague and not very convincing evidence of the witnesses reported in the German Amtliches Material, Andreyev, Krivosertsev, Kisselev and Silvestrov (see pages 302-304) it would seem that the prisoners were shot after leaving the lorries in Kose Gory wood.

From the Report of the Special Commission one would infer that the prisoners had been taken by bus to the "special" camps, at places not actually mentioned, in order that they might be used for work on the roads.

Major Solski's diary tells us that after arrival at the wood they were subjected to a special search at which their watches, rings, roubles, belts and pocket knives were removed. It was at that point that the diary broke off.

The German material made a point of the fact that watches and rings were not, as a rule, found on the bodies but that money, was found. (See pages 235, 239, 289, etc.).

In general, the material published by the Germans does not give much support to the thesis put forward by them and it is therefore necessary to analyse the statements made by both sides about the fate of the prisoners after they left Gnezdovo.

40. *The Soviet thesis: the three special camps and their fate.*

According to the Soviets the Polish prisoners of war were from April-May 1940, in special camps, somewhere West of Smolensk and engaged on building roads. When in July 1941, these camps were over-run by the Germans the Polish prisoners fell into their hands and in August and September 1941 were murdered by them.

The Report of the Soviet Special Commission while asserting that an undefined number of Polish prisoners of war worked for about fifteen months building and repairing roads somewhere in the western districts of the Smolensk region left unanswered many questions that naturally arise. (See pages 350-352). The

Report did not definitely establish the fact that the Polish prisoners working on the roads were themselves the Polish officers, formerly in the camp at Kozielsk, let alone in those at Starobielsk and Ostashkov. At most it allowed of that conclusion being drawn indirectly. In this connection it is especially important to note that it was established by the evidence of a Polish witness (and confirmed by an article in the Soviet "Wolna Polska" see page 364.) that there were in fact, in the Smolensk area three camps for Polish prisoners of war working on the roads, but that they were camps for prisoners of other ranks and not for the officers removed from the three big camps. (See page 363 and following pages).

The fragmentary, inconsistent and improbable story of the over-running of these camps by the Germans in July 1941 and of the capture by them of every single Polish prisoner was told in pages 352-365. This story, as presented in the Report, gives no concrete evidence to prove that all the people taken into the Smolensk area from the Kozielsk camp fell into German hands and even less concerning the prisoners from Starobielsk, and Ostashkov, who were taken from those camps in April and May 1940, and sent in an unknown direction.

Moreover, the evidence of the witnesses Alexeyeva, Mikhailova and Konakhovskaya about the "shady doings" in the country house at Kose Gory, found in the Report of the Special Commission (see pages 367-372), apart altogether from the doubts to which this evidence gives rise from a juridical point of view, made no mention of the shooting by the Germans of the Polish officer prisoners of war formerly in the Kozielsk camp nor of those from Starobielsk and Ostashkov. There was nothing concerning these officers in the evidence given to the Commission by Alexeyev and the other "six witnesses domiciled in the neighbourhood of Kose Gory" nor in that of Bazilevsky or Yefimov nor in the written evidence quoted in the Report i. e. the notebook of Menshagin. If therefore, setting aside all the many doubts to which this evidence gives rise, we presume that all the evidence was given entirely in accordance with fact, the only conclusion to be drawn in that in August and September 1941 the Germans shot, at Kose Gory, some Polish P. O. W.s, the total number of whom was far less than the total number of prisoners taken to Gnezdovo station from Kozielsk, to say nothing of those from Starobielsk and Ostashkov about whose transfer to the Smolensk area there was no mention by any of the witnesses. Nor, in fact, was Kozielsk specifically mentioned, nor was it stated anywhere that the prisoners shot by the Germans were officers.

It is therefore necessary to conclude that the only evidence, which could prove the Soviet thesis that in August and September 1942 the Germans shot, at Kose Gory, the Polish officer prisoners of war removed from the three big camps in April and May 1940 and from that time thought of as "missing" in the U. S. S. R.—would be the corpses lying in the Katyn graves and identified by the Germans as being those of the "missing" Polish officers.

The material published by the Soviets gives no additional evidence that the Germans committed the crime in question.

A point has been reached at which it appears that no direct evidence as to who, in fact, was responsible for the crime was made available either by the Germans or by the Russians and it therefore becomes necessary to look closely at the circumstantial evidence available to see if it will reveal what authority was responsible for the murder.

41. *Who is lying in the Katyn graves?*

Just after the publication of the first communiqué about the finding near Katyn of a grave containing the bodies of "more than 10,000 Polish officers," the Soviet Information Bureau issued a communiqué stating that the German revelations, "left no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish prisoners of war" and in the same breath referred to the "clumsily concocted fabrication about the numerous graves . . . allegedly discovered near Smolensk" and recalled the existence in the Smolensk area of the "historic Gnezdovaya burial place." (See page 247.)

The communiqué broadcast by Moscow Radio on 18.4.43, spoke about the shooting of the Polish prisoners of war by instalments, the placing with the bodies of "touched-up" documents which came from the "Gestapo archives" and the use "for this purpose of the archeological excavations of the Gnezdovaya burial mound" (see page 259. Text published in Keesings Contemporary Archives, Vol. 4, 1940-1943. Page 5731).

On 19.4.43. "Pravda" wrote that "as had now become perfectly clear" the Germans "bestially killed the former Polish prisoners of war and many Soviet people" and afterwards themselves put in their pockets "visiting cards and identification papers" (see page 260-261).

The Report of the Soviet Special Commission quoted the evidence of the witness Moskovskaya about her conversation with one Yegorov on the subject of the alleged search by Russian prisoners in March 1943, of the bodies in the Katyn graves and the removal from their clothes of some documents and their replacement by others (see page 387-388).

The Germans published in *Amtliches Material* a list of the 4143 corpses exhumed by them of which they had been able to identify and name 67.9%. This list included a description of the objects found with each body among which were many personal papers, and possessions, such as engraved cigarette cases, diaries etc. Most of these objects found, or said to have been found on the bodies, were publicly exhibited by the Germans and seen by the many "tourists" who visited Katyn. Photographs were also taken of some of them and distributed all over Europe.

Despite the fact that from April 1943, the Soviets raised frequent objections until the publication of the Report of the Special Commission, on the grounds that the Germans had put faked documents into the graves, they themselves made no attempt to prove that any particular document published as having been found on the Katyn bodies, was not, in fact, genuine. Nor did they refer in the Report of Special Commission to the archeological significance of the Gnezdovo region.

The list of names of identified Katyn bodies published in *Amtliches Material* was submitted to the test referred to on page 425, that is, it was compared with the lists in the possession of the Polish authorities of the names of the missing officers and the particulars about them. The result of this comparison was that of the 2914 bodies listed in *Amtliches Material* as having been identified by name, 100% identity of names and personal data the German and the Polish lists was found in 855 cases and a 66% identity in 590 cases.

In considering these comparisons of the two lists, the German and the Polish, the following points must be borne in mind:

1. The lists drawn up by the Polish authorities were based on the evidence of prisoners afterwards "found", who were not always sure of the particulars relating to their fellow prisoners and in some cases were not even certain of the correct spelling of their names.

2. The German lists were based on data taken from documents that were not always easily deciphered, some of which dated from the time when the individuals concerned were in Soviet captivity and were consequently written in Russian characters.

3. Polish spelling makes it in some cases impossible to spell Polish names correctly if the latin alphabet is used, without the special Polish letters. Thus the name "Zaleski", when written in the latin characters only becomes the quite different name of Zaleski. This difficulty was increased when, as sometimes happened, the Polish names were written in Russian characters.

4. The spelling of the Polish names on the German list, had in many cases, undergone translation from Polish to Russian, Russian to German, and back to Polish phonetically. This resulted in many of the names becoming completely altered, as for instance:—

Rzółkowski—Pyakoxkum—Schulkowsky—Szulkowski or Zulkowski. The complete correlation of 50% of the personal data of about 50% of the identified Katyn victims with those of the missing Polish officers, thus removes all suspicion that the Germans may have used archaeological diggings at Gnezdovo with "provocational" intent. There can therefore be no further doubt but that the bodies were those of the missing officers, particularly in view of the fact that in the other 50% of the cases many personal data were partly identical or quite similar in both lists.

It would have been, in point of fact, quite impossible for the German Gestapo to have in their possession the personal papers of Polish officers who from September 1939 were in Soviet captivity so that the theory put forward by the Soviets that the "visiting cards and identification papers" were taken from the "Gestapo archives" and put into the pockets of the Katyn victims was baseless.

More than 90% of the cases in which the names and particulars of the missing officers were the same on both, the Polish and the German lists, were those of individuals who were found to have been prisoners of war in the Kozielsk camp. Only a few of them were marked on the Polish list as having been at Starobielsk and a very few at Ostashkov. This can be explained by the fact that the camps were in existence for more than half a year during which time individuals and small groups were transferred from one to the other and the possibility of the Polish lists not having been completely accurate with regard to every individual in all these camps. Taking all these facts into consideration there can be no

doubt at all but that the bodies found by the Germans in the Katyn graves, were those of the missing Polish officer prisoners of war from the camp at Kozielsk, liquidated in April-May 1940.

This conclusion gains further support from the comparison of the total number of bodies found in the graves and that of the officers in the Kozielsk camp. The number of bodies given by Amtliches Material as having been exhumed in the first period up till June was 4143 which coincides almost exactly with the number of prisoners removed from Kozielsk in 17 convoys during April 1940. 4309 less 150 in convoy of 26.4.40, sent direct to Pavlishtchev Bor-4159.

Furthermore, the probably number of bodies in the eighth grave, calculated according to the measurements in Amtliches Material, coincides almost exactly with the number in the two convoys removed from Kozielsk on 10th and 11th May, 1940. (See pages 48, 331, 332).

Finally an interesting comparison can be made between the lists of bodies given in Amtliches Material, about 70% of which were identified on the basis of rank and the Polish lists made on the same basis. These figures are as follows:¹

Polish	Rank	German
4.....	Generals.....	2
about 100.....	Colonels & Lt. Cols.....	62
about 300.....	Majors.....	165
about 1,000.....	Captains.....	440
about 2,500.....	Lieuts.....	1,472

All these facts lead us to the conclusion that there are lying in the Katyn graves, the bodies of all the officers who were taken to Gnezdovo station after their removal from Kozielsk in the spring of 1940 and were afterwards held to be missing.

42. *Who is not lying in the Katyn graves?*

The Germans launched the Katyn campaign with the statement made for propaganda purposes that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies. For some time they held to that figure, but as the exhumations progressed and lists of identified victims were published, they referred less and less to the number of bodies found. Finally, after 4,143 bodies had been removed from the seven graves, the exhumations were stopped on account, it was said, of the summer heat. In the documents of Amtliches Material the number 10,000 is not mentioned at all nor do they contain any evidence that the Katyn graves held the corpses of officers removed in Spring 1940 from the Starobielsk and Ostashkov camps.

The first report about the impressions of the first "Polish Delegation" to Katyn, sent to the Polish Government in London through the Polish Underground Movement, stated that the number of bodies in the graves was much smaller than that announced by German propaganda and probably did not much exceed 4,000 (see page 229).

The detailed analysis made in Part III pp. 322-329 of these notes showed that the 7 graves discovered by the Germans could not, in actual fact, have held more than 4,850 bodies (see p. 324) and it follows from this that in all probability the exhumations were not interrupted but came to an end in the beginning of June 1943, all the corpses being transferred to the new communal graves. Therefore, the list published in Amtliches Material totaling 4,143 bodies gave the whole contents of the seven graves.

The original statements of German propaganda that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies were to all appearances given some support by the cessation of the exhumations on account of the heat in early June and the discovery of the eighth grave. From this grave only a few of the bodies were exhumed and these were replaced without any explanation being given. The measurements of this eighth grave as given in Amtliches Material showed that it could not have contained more than 124 bodies (see p. 331) which number did not very much increase the total number of bodies exhumed from the graves but brought it almost exactly to the total of the missing prisoners from Kozielsk.

The Soviet attitude to the question of the numbers of bodies in the Katyn graves was exactly the opposite to that taken by the Germans. They started by denying that the bodies were those of Polish officers (cf. their remarks about the

¹ See pages 23 and 327. Of the Generals, one was in civilian clothes (see page 27), and another was taken to Pavlishtchev Bor. The Germans included doctors, vets, etc. in separate groups, whereas in the Polish lists they are shown mostly as captains.

archeogloical burial mounds at Gnezdovo) asserting at the same time that there had never been more than "some thousand" or "two thousand" officers in Soviet captivity (cf. Vyshinsky and Barayev).

From January 1944, however, they accept the original German statement that the graves contained more than 10,000 bodies saying that there might be 11,000 or even 15,000 bodies of Polish prisoners of war both officers and men. This number corresponded more or less with the total number of prisoners of war who, in April 1940, had been in the three big camps and were afterwards missing.

As it was clearly evident from the Report of the Soviet Special Commission and of that of the medico-legal experts that the exhumations made at the time of the Russian investigations were carried out on the new cemetery into which the Germans, with the participation of the representatives of the Polish Red Cross, had put the 4,143 bodies taken from the original graves (see pp. 346-347) the method by which the Soviet experts, after the exhumation of only 925 corpses from the cemetery, were able to establish the total number of murdered prisoners lying in the original graves as having been 11,000, is completely incomprehensible.

This analysis of both, the German and the Russian material shows that though the Katyn graves contained the bodies of all the missing people from Kozielsk, they did not contain those of the people from Starobielsk and Ostashkov who, more than 10,000 in number, were removed from those camps in the Spring of 1940 and were subsequently missing.

43. *The order of the bodies in the graves.*

The study of the diaries found on the bodies at Katyn brings to light a very significant fact namely that the bodies of prisoners who left the Kozielsk camp in the same convoys were found lying close to one another in the Katyn graves.

When the camp was being liquidated the authors of the diaries waiting anxiously for their turn to be, as they thought, released and sent home, particularly noted the names of those of their friends who had been "happy enough" to leave the camp in earlier convoys. These entries, therefore, make it possible to include in the table of convoys the names of a few people who left the camp in each one.

As the Germans exhumed the bodies they numbered them successively and, what is very significant, the bodies of the prisoners who left Kozielsk in the same convoys have in many instances been given numbers near together. One such instance is given on pp. 64-65 above where it was described how Major Solski's body was given the number 490 while that of one of his twelve companions in the same compartment in the prison truck, Lt. Col. Kutyba, was 481.¹

Several examples of this occurrence follow:

(a) From the notebook of Wais and the dairy of Wajda it is known that both these men left Kozielsk on 11.4.40 with a convoy of about 300 prisoners. Wais mentioned in his notebook that in this convoy were included also his friends Ulrichs and Skupien. Capt. Trepiak noted in his diary that there were also in that convoy BOGUSLAWSKI, PIOTROWSKI, IWANUSZKA and PRZY-GODZINSKI.

The list in Amtliches Material reads as follows:

Number	Name
1246-----	Lt. Sebastian SKUPIEN
1453-----	Wlodzimierz WAJDA
1456-----	2/Lt. Czesław Prus BOGUSLAWSKI
1458-----	Bronislaw WAIS
1476-----	2/Lt. Otto ULRICHS

(b) In the diaries of Capt. Joseph Trepiak and Dr. Dobiesław Jakubowicz we find entries to the effect that their authors left Kozielsk with the convoy of 21.4.40 in which were about 240 people. The bodies and effects of these two men were numbered on the German list as--

867-----	TREPIAK
836-----	JAKUBOWICZ

(c) Jakubowicz made the following entry in his diary on 16.4.40 "They were sent off. Capt. Trojanowski Silvester has gone" On the same day Capt. Trepiak wrote "They were calling from early morning, up till now ZNAJ-DOWSKI and SOLTAN have gone. Altogether about 400 were sent off to-day."

¹ From two diaries, Solski's and another's and from evidence of "found" prisoners from Kozielsk it is known that the fourth convoy which left Kozielsk on 7.4.40 included two Generals and many senior officers. On the German list of the identified bodies there is a relatively greater incidence of high ranking officers in the groups of numbers below and above the 480-490 group.

The German list reads:—

2772-----	Capt TROJANOWSKI Silvester
2795-----	ZNAJDOWSKI Wacław
3674-----	2/Lt. SOLTAN Władysław

(d) In the dairy of Capt. Trepiak under the date of 19.4.40 was the entry "They took them from 8.0 a. m. until 1.0 p. m., it is said that 303 were sent. Among them WACŁAW LEITGEBER, RUMIANEK, DOMANIA, RZĄCZEWSKI

The German list reads:—

3553-----	LEITGEBER Bohdan Wacław
3664-----	RZĄCZEWSKI A. M.
3666-----	DOMANIA Jan
3746-----	RUMIANEK Stanisław

(e) An officer taken from Kozielsk on 29.4.40 (see p. 70) in a convoy of about 300 people related that there were among others in this group Dr. TUCHOLSKI and 2/Lt. KOROWAJCZYK from Vilna.

On the list in Amtliches material there are:—

3864-----	Dr. TUCHOLSKI Tadeusz
3892-----	2/Lt. KOROWAJCZYK Leonard

The fact that the bodies of men who left Kozielsk on the same day were found lying in close proximity to one another in the Katyn graves, makes it virtually impossible to accept the Soviet thesis that these officers were for sixteen months living in special camps. For, during the time when they were supposed to have been working on the roads, especially in view of the German advance, supposed capture of the camps and the resulting confusion the individual officers would almost inevitably have got separated from their original travelling companions and, that many of them should come together once again on the eve of their death, points to a coincidence so highly improbable as to render the Soviet thesis quite unacceptable.

44. *The date of the murder. . The length of time the bodies were in the graves.*

Both the Powers accused of the crime, during the period when they were in control of the territory on which the graves were situated, arranged for medico-legal experts to inspect the bodies and to give a decision as to the date of the murders based on the medico-legal data.

The Germans employed for this purpose, the Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology of Breslau University, Prof. Buhtz, who worked at Katyn from March to June 1943, and the so called "European Medical Commission" consisting of twelve representatives of different countries, mostly professors of Forensic Medicine, Anatomy, Pathology etc., who worked on the bodies from 28th—30th April 1943. The conclusions of these German and foreign experts set out in their reports and protocols, which are referred to on pages 282—291 and 332—227 above, were that "pure scientific deductions show that the bodies had been lying in the graves . . . at least three years". These conclusions were based on facts the significance of which can only be appreciated by other experts in the same field, namely the state of decomposition of the bodies and their various organs, in particular the cerebral matter subjected to Professor Orsós test, the degree of formation of adipocere etc.

Affirming that mass murder on such a scale created unprecedented conditions, the German experts looked for confirmation of their "pure scientific deductions" to additional evidence such as the degree and type of corrosion of the metal objects found in the graves, the age of the spruces planted on them, the evidence of witnesses, dates of the documents found on the bodies etc.

The Soviet experts, mostly Red Army doctors (see page 345) undertook their investigation, which lasted a week, without the assistance of anyone from outside the Soviet Union. On the basis of the same data as were used by the German experts, i. e., degree of decomposition, formation of adipocere etc., (see page 401), and of additional evidence provided by the comparison of the state of the bodies from the Katyn graves with those of the other victims of German bestiality, and the dates of documents hitherto undiscovered in the graves, these experts came to the conclusion that the Katyn victims were murdered by shooting "about two years ago i. e., between September and December 1941" (see page 402).

Such a very wide divergence in the opinions given by these learned experts as to the date of the murder and the lengths of time the bodies had been lying in the graves, gives the layman rather to wonder and arouses in him no little skepticism as to the value of medico-legal conclusions. Clearly only another specialist would

be in a position to evaluate the conclusions of both parties of experts and to attempt to find a scientific reason for the divergence in their view.

As the bodies were not examined under the auspices of any neutral and impartial institution we can only point out the fundamental divergence in the opinions of the experts called by both interested parties.

It will be remembered in this connection that a request was made to the International Red Cross by the Polish Government for a neutral Commission to be sent to Katyn to report on the evidence and that this request which gained the immediate approval of the Germans was not acceded to, on account of the Russians' categorical refusal from the first instant to contemplate the creation of such a Commission. The argument expressed in the Soviet note on this subject that "such an 'investigation' conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty" was made rather prematurely.

It would have been perhaps more politic to have agreed in principle to the idea of such a Commission, but to have insisted on certain conditions. The Soviet Government could have asked for suitable guarantees as to the composition of the Commission and its freedom to work, as also for passes for its own observers etc. If these guarantees had been refused or in practice not adhered to, it could with reason, have withheld its consent to the creation of such a Commission or have interrupted the investigation while in progress.

It is moreover difficult to understand why the Soviet Government, when organising its own investigation in January 1944, did not invite any neutral or Allied representatives to be present, since "conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population" no longer existed and the Commission was able to work under perfectly free conditions. Had the Soviet Government done so, no objections could have been raised to the findings of such an investigation.

45. *The season of the year at which the murders were committed.*

The Germans maintained that the murders took place in the Spring, April and May of 1940, the Russians, in the Autumn of 1941.

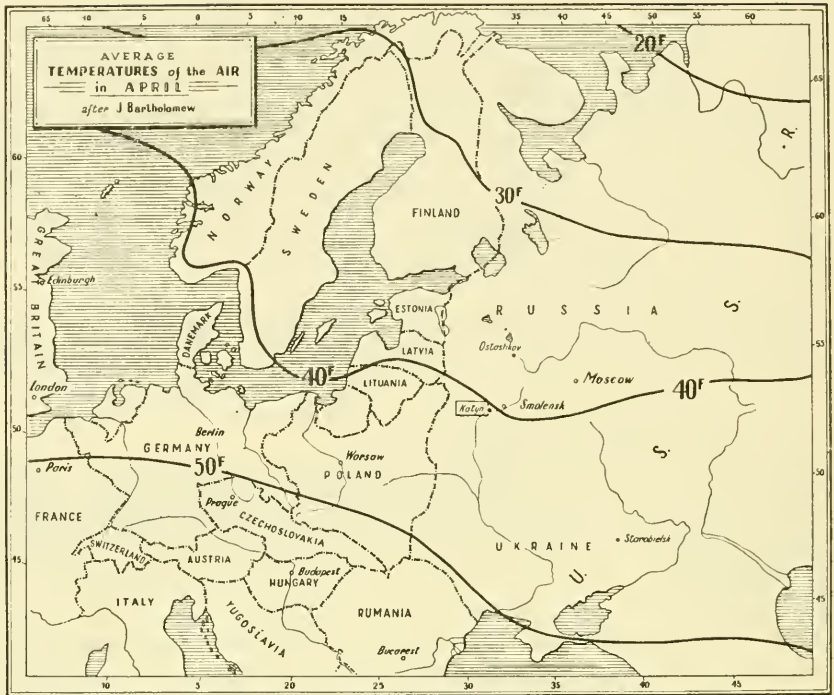
The German experts emphasised that the bodies were free from traces of insects as a proof of the fact that the murders had been committed in a cool, insect free season, (see p. 290) and they made a point of the fact the bodies were dressed in winter clothes (see pp. 283-322). The report of Prof. Buhtz shows that he was surprised to find that the bodies in the eighth grave were, on the contrary, dressed as in summer (see p. 330).

From the Katyn diaries, however, we know that when the first convoys left Kozielsk it was real winter weather. "Snow is whirling around, it is cloudy, in the fields as much snow as in January", was written in one of the diaries (see p. 67). As is usual in the continental climate of Russia, the weather had completely changed by the following month and, as the prisoners from the last convoy that left Kozielsk on 12.5.40 for Pavlishchev Bor reported, the weather was at that time quite summery and "the sun was beating down". These independent written descriptions of the weather may perhaps, explain the difference in the type of clothing worn by the greater number of prisoners removed from Kozielsk during April and those in the two convoys that left the camp after an interval of about two weeks on May 10th and 11th (see p. 48).

The descriptions of the graves in Amthliches Material emphasized the fact that grave No. 5, which lay lowest and nearest to the marshy ground, when it was opened in 1943, quickly filled with subsoil water. This fact can possibly be explained on the assumption that this grave was originally dug when the earth was still frozen as it probably would have been in early spring.

White who, it will be remembered, had many talks with the English speaking journalists in Moscow who had been present at the re-exhumations in Katyn, in January 1944, tells in his book of how "... an observant reporter noticed that one Polish body was clad in long, heavy underwear, and mentioned it to the Soviet doctor in charge. The doctor remarked that most of the bodies wore either heavy underwear, or overcoats, or both. ... When this point was raised with the Soviet conducting officers, there was considerable confusion and the Russians finally argued that the climate of Poland is uncertain so that fur overcoats and long underwear might be worn in September" (see pp. 133-134).

It should be noted, however, that the official conclusion of the Soviet experts moved the date of the murders forward to the period September-December 1941, despite the fact that the Soviet witnesses had declared that the Polish P. O. W.'s were shot at the close of August and during most of September of that year (p. 368).



The attached isotherm maps show that in the Smolensk area the average temperature of the air in April is 40° Fahrenheit which is the same temperature as is found in the Faroe islands at that season; while in August the average temperature there is about 65° Fahrenheit and this corresponds to the average temperature found at that time in resorts on the channel coast where, in August, the bathing season is at its height.

Passing to quite another aspect of the problem, it may be noted that in the Autumn of 1941 a Russian offensive which was launched on the Smolensk sector of the Eastern Front met with some success, and it is, therefore, doubtful whether the Germans would have occupied themselves at such a time shooting thousands of Poles in small batches.

46. *The method by which the murders were committed.*

From the time of the Russian Revolution it has been popularly supposed that a shot in the back of the head is the accepted method of execution in Soviet Russia. The Report of the Soviet medico-legal experts stated, however, that the method used in the Katyn murders was completely identical with that used by the Germans in the mass shooting of the Soviet population and Soviet prisoners of war in many places among others Smolensk, Kharkov, Krasnodar and Voronezh. Soviet reports about German bestialities published later, referred to the shot in the base of the skull as the "typical German method" cf. the conclusions of the Soviet medico-legal expert Commission's report on the so-called "Valley of Death" in Janow camp near Lwow, in "Pravda" of 23.12.44 and separate pamphlet. Nevertheless it is generally known that the typical German methods of mass murder were the "factory of death", the gas chamber, machine gun shooting, etc., and not the more "primitive" method of individual revolver shots.

All the documents agreed that the prisoners were driven in small batches of about thirty people to the place of execution so that it would have been quite possible to have killed them by this "primitive" method and, it seems that 4250 men could have been easily exterminated in this way in the period from the beginning of April to the middle of May. While it is improbable that 11,000, or more, could have been killed in this way in the short time embracing "the close of August and during most of September" (see p. 368). It is interesting to note that the Russian report makes no mention of bayonet wounds found on some of the bodies. It will be remembered that the Germans had reported that these wounds had been made by four edged bayonets, which are exclusively used by the Russian Army.

The German material allotted considerable space to the question of the spruces planted on the original Katyn graves. The age of the trees was supposed to have proved the date of the murder, the method of planting the trees on the fresh graves was held to be typical of the Soviets, as evidenced by those planted on old Russian graves in the Katyn area. (see p. 333). The Soviet documents didn't mention the spruces nor did they refer to the origin of the ammunition used by murderers. As Professor Buhtz report stated, this ammunition was of German origin (see pp. 334-5). This circumstance, speaking apparently in favour of the Russian allegations, and against the Germans, was not exploited at all by the Russians, whereas the Germans, openly admitting the fact, had explained it on the grounds that great quantities of this ammunition had been exported to Russia, Poland and the Baltic States.

Neither side went into the question of the origin of the cord, used to tie up some of the victims, very carefully. The "European Commission" only pointed out that the Polish officers were tied up in the same way as some of the bodies lying in the old Russian graves (see p. 287). Some lengths of this cord found their way as "souvenirs" to Poland where, it was examined by competent experts and found to have been of Russian origin.

47. *The object of the murder of the Polish officers.*

In the last paragraph (no. 8) of the Final Conclusions of the Soviet Special Commission it was stated that the shooting by Germans of the Polish prisoners of war in Katyn "consistently carried out their policy of the physical extermination of the Slav peoples" (see p. 408).

The German policy of the extermination of the Poles in occupied Poland was certainly quite well known to all the world and, in view of this, the conclusions of the Soviet Commission may seem to be, at least apparently, right. It should, however, be remembered that, in general, the Germans did not hide the fact of their policy of the "iron fist" in Poland and, on the contrary, tended to emphasize it, in order to terrorise the civil population. They frequently conducted public mass executions and made information about executions generally known. It is

therefore, difficult to see why, as was stated in the Report of the Soviet Commission, the Germans should have kept the fact of the murder of the Polish officers in 1941 secret and displayed so much anxiety lest the event should become generally known. (Evidence of witness Alexeyev p. 343, Bazilevsky p. 376 and 378).

It is also incomprehensible why, the Germans, if they were consistently carrying out their policy of exterminating the Poles, should have murdered only those Polish prisoners of war who fell into their hands in 1941 and left alive throughout the war many more Polish P. O. W's, among them many officers, who fell into captivity in 1939 and to whom they, in general, applied the principles of International Law. In fact, when, as happened, they shot prisoners of war for crimes supposed to have been committed by them, they made no special secret of it.

The Soviet Report, in paragraph 4 of its final conclusions, maintained that the Germans murdered the Polish prisoners of war in the Autumn of 1941 with the object of being able to use the evidence "with provocational aims"—"in connection with the deterioration of the general military and political situation for Germany at the beginning of 1943" when they calculated "on setting Russians and Poles at loggerheads" and thereby making trouble in the Allied camp. This assertion can in no way stand up to serious criticism, since it implies a most improbable ability to foresee the future on the part of the Germans.

It would, perhaps, also be possible to look for some special aim and purpose in the murder of Polish officers by the Russians.

Lenin, in his world famous work "State and Revolution" completely accepted the thesis of Marx and Engels and among them the following:—

(a) That the victorious proletariat should completely destroy the whole apparatus of the bourgeois state, leaving not one "stone upon another". (Marx. 18th Brumaire. Louis Napoleon).

(b) That one of the most characteristic features of the state is the existence of a group of armed men, set aside from the rest of the society, namely regular troops commanded by officers, police, gendarmerie etc. (Engels. "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State").

If we take into account this doctrinaire basis of Soviet policy, it becomes clear that, it would, from the Communistic point of view, be quite reasonable to exterminate systematically the leaders of the armed forces of the State which it was intended should be destroyed.

48. *Question of the documents bearing dates later than April 1940, and the putting in the Katyn graves of bodies from elsewhere.*

In the opinion of the Soviet experts, the most decisive and absolute convincing argument that the Katyn murders were not committed by the Russians, in the Spring of 1940, was the finding in the graves of documents bearing dates subsequent to that time. (see p. 402).

As was stated on pp. 402-406, the nine documents described in the Soviet Report were, as evidence, not convincing. All of them had either been issued by the Soviet or had passed through their hands and they concerned either completely unknown people or individuals who were not known to have been in the Kozielsk camp (see p. 406).

The Soviets gave the following explanation of the fact that the documents at a later date than April 1940, had not been found when the graves were officially opened up by the Germans:

(1) That the Germans had, a month before the official discovery of the Katyn graves made an unofficial exhumation of the bodies, more than 11,000 in all.

(2) That during that exhumation they had removed from them all the documents bearing dates later than April 1940.

(3) That 500 Russian prisoners of war had been used for this purpose who, having accomplished this arduous task in one month, were, in their turn killed.

This explanation was itself based, in the first place on the evidence of the witness Moskovskaya. This witness, however, it will be remembered (p. 387) was supposed to have been told by one Yegorov, in March, of events which had supposedly occurred in the following April. The evidence of the Soviet witnesses on the subject of the putting in the graves of the bodies, said to have been dug up elsewhere and brought to Katyn in lorries, in March 1943, was equally questionable. The corpses put into the graves in this way, only a month before the official exhumations were begun, must inevitably have been noticed by neutral professors and journalists or some one of the many people visiting the graves during the exhumation period. Even the Soviet witnesses, however, who told the Special Commission that they had taken part in these excursions and some of whom would have been especially qualified to observe facts of this kind, as, for

instance, the pathologist Zhukov, did not tell the Commission about these extraneous bodies or, if they did, the Commission did not bother to mention the fact in their Report.

40. The Soviet declarations on the subject of the missing Polish officer prisoners of war.

In analysing the circumstantial evidence in the Katyn Affair, it is necessary to take into account the declarations of the official Soviet Representatives on the general subject of the Polish prisoners of war.

Before the signing of the Polish Soviet Pact in July 1941, no official enquiry about these prisoners could be addressed to the Soviet authorities but individual requests for information were made by relative and fellow prisoners. When correspondence which had up till April 1940 been arriving safely, began to be returned to the senders, marked "Retour . . . Parti", some of the prisoners' relatives addressed enquiries to the Soviet authorities. They received the reply that the individuals they were enquiring about had been transferred, on the liquidation of the big camps, to places unknown to the Soviet authorities (see pp. 295-6).

A small party of prisoners who were in camps at Pavlishtchev Bor and Griasovetz, when asking the whereabouts of their former fellow prisoners, were put off with evasive answers and when special delegate of the N. K. V. D. came to Griasovetz from Moscow, he assured the officers that Griasovetz was the only camp in Soviet Russia containing officers, as all the other Polish officers had been released or had returned home (see p. 121).

In the Autumn of 1940 some Polish officers, thought to be in sympathy with Soviet ideas, were told by very high N. K. V. D. officials that a "great mistake" had been made about the Polish officers and that it would not be possible to take them into account, when planning the organisation of a Red Polish Division. (See p. 128).

When the Germans launched their attack on Russia, on July 4th 1941, the Soviet Ambassador in London, Maisky, informed representatives of the British Government that there were not more than 20,000 Polish prisoners of war in the U. S. S. R., at the most (see p. 139). Practically the same figure was given by a Soviet General when asked about Polish prisoners of war, in the middle of August 1941 (see p. 143).

In fact, about 28,000 Polish prisoners of war were afterwards found in camps named by this Soviet General. It is incomprehensible, however, why Maisky in London gave a smaller figure on July 4th, when the three special camps in the Smolensk area containing about 11-15,000 Polish prisoners of war (among them about 8,000 officers) had not yet been over-run by the Germans and all those people should have been at the disposition of the Allied forces. If these camps were, in fact, in existence could the Soviet authorities really not have known of them?

During the nine months official Polish Soviet negotiations on the subject of the missing officers, which were conducted with the highest Soviet officials, various declarations about their fate were made on the Soviet side. It was said that the Polish officers had been released in 1940 and sent back to Poland (it was known that that was not so from the fact that the Polish Underground Movement had been unable to trace a single one), that they had been released after the "amnesty" and would turn up in due course, that they had, perhaps, escaped to Manchuria etc., etc. At no point, however, were the "special camps" in the Smolensk area mentioned. Even when Stalin in his talk with General Anders on 18.3.42, i. e., after the negotiations had been going on for seven months, expressed, very vaguely, the possibility that the missing Polish officers "were in camps in territories which had been taken by the "Germans and were dispersed" (see p. 212), he said nothing about Smolensk. Only after the German revelations about Katyn did it become "perfectly clear" that the 11,000 or more Polish prisoners of war from these camps had been engaged in construction work West of Smolensk and had been seized by the Germans (see p. 261).

Could it be that these special camps were so secret that they were known neither to the local Soviet authorities, nor to Maisky in London nor to the Soviet military authorities, nor, indeed to the highest Soviet officials in Moscow?

Why, moreover, did not Vyshinsky, having assured the Polish ambassador on 2.11.41, that the Soviet authorities had "records of everyone alive or dead, I have promised the details and I will produce them", keep his promise?

Until the real answers to these and many other questions that naturally arise in connection with the Soviet explanations on the subject of the "missing" officers are given, the Katyn mystery itself will not be completely solved. These answers are only to be found in the Archives of the N. K. V. D.

EXHIBIT 33

(NOTE—The following exhibit contains supplemental material uncovered by the Polish Government in exile in London after it had prepared the foregoing report.)

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON FACTS AND DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE KATYN MASSACRE

INTRODUCTION

In the confidential report—Facts and Documents concerning Polish POW's captured by the USSR during the 1939 campaign—dated "February 1946" we presented, on the basis of the facts at that time available, the history of the missing Polish POW's, who disappeared while in Soviet captivity and some of whom were later found in the Katyn graves.

Although, at that time, we had before us not only the outlines of the picture, but also many of the details, there were, nonetheless, several gaps in our information the existence of which we were well aware. Now, however, we are in a position to present a supplementary report based on new material. It mainly concerns four points.

1. How the discovery of Katyn was made.
2. How the exhumations and medico-legal examinations were conducted.
3. The number of bodies the Katyn graves actually held.
4. Information on the executions given by a local inhabitant.

Since the report "Facts and Documents" was written the trial of the Major War Criminals has taken place and been concluded in Nuremberg with a verdict of guilt in all but three cases. Among the accusations was that of the responsibility for the Katyn murder which was included in the Indictment signed on 6th of October 1945 in Berlin by the prosecutors of Gr. Britain, U. S. A., France and the Soviet Union. During the trial this particular item in the indictment was supported and argued by the Soviet Prosecutor.

The Nuremberg Tribunal did not, however, enumerate the Katyn murder among the motives given for the final verdict, which goes to prove that in spite of every effort made by the Soviet Prosecutor the Tribunal did not accept the Soviet charge as proved.

The official reports of the Nuremberg trial concerning this part of the indictment have not yet been published, but nevertheless we will cite here depositions made in the course of the Nuremberg Trial and published in press reports, since they are intimately connected with those points mentioned above as being the subject of the present Supplement.

I. THE DISCOVERY OF THE KATYN GRAVES

1. *The first information about the graves.*

The account which was given in the first German communique of 13th April 1942 and afterwards confirmed in Amtliches Material/see Facts and Doc. p. 301/according to which the Katyn graves were already, in 1942, discovered by Polish labourers in the Todt organisation seems to accord with the facts. In the region of Smolensk as in other localities near the front line many civilian labourers from the so called Todt organisation were set to work collecting scrap metal, repairing roads etc. Among them were to be found also Poles. The workers of the Todt organisation were not isolated from the local inhabitants and among them were many who could speak Russian more or less fluently.

A man who was living at that time in the region of Katyn and who is now in the West states: "In the Spring of 1942 Polish workers who were working in the Todt organisation collecting scrap metal, got news from the local population that in the Kose Gory forest were to be found graves of executed Polish officers. I myself heard such a conversation. I know from Kisielew that these workers went to him and asked him to show them the graves and Kisielew took them to the graves on which they placed a small wooden cross. I have seen this cross myself."

But the relations between the German authorities and the semi-free Polish workers were not, of course, friendly and it is therefore not surprising that the Poles did not inform the authorities about their discovery. The same Russian witness stated further:

"In January 1943 there appeared in the newspaper "Nowyj Put" published in Russian by the Germans in Sowlensk, an article describing the crimes committed by the Bolsheviks in the regions they occupied in 1939. The article told of the arrest and deportation of hundreds of thousands of people to Siberia, a great many of whom died there, and mentioned at the end that General Sikorski could not find several thousand Polish officers in Russia when he began to organise the Polish Army in the Soviet Union."

This witness himself associated these two facts with one another namely, the enquiries made by General Sikorski for the missing officers and the discovery of the graves in the Katyn forest by the Polish workers, when he read the article and he told his friend, a certain Eugene Siemianenko who became interpreter in the local Command of the Geheime Feldpolizei when the district of Smolensk was occupied by the Germans, about his suppositions. The attention of the Germans was thus drawn to the Katyn graves and the interest of the O. C. Local Geheime Feldpolizei, 2/Lt Voss, was aroused.

The same witness stated that some time after his talk with Siemianenko one of his relatives "who looked after the horses in the Geheime Feldpolizei" told him that he had to go the next day somewhere with the N. C. O's from the Geheime Feldpolizei. Next day when I reported to the Geheime Feldpolizei, myself and two local inhabitants went in a cart in the direction of Kose Gory. Two sergeants from the Geheime Feldpolizei came after us on motorcycles. . . . When we arrived at the N. K. V. D. house the two N. C. O's asked me where the graves of the Polish officers were. I replied that I did not know but that I would go to Kisielew who was living nearby and who would certainly know something. Kisielew was at home lying on the stove and when I told him what I had come about he said that already the year before Polish workers had asked for the same thing, as I have already said. To this I replied that we intended to open the graves. Kisielew dressed himself, went out with me and guided us to the graves."

"We first broke up the frozen earth with a pick and then we took it in turns to dig with shovels. When we had dug a fairly deep pit we smelt the odour of corpses. As my two companions could not bear this smell and thought they would be sick and as the smell did not affect me so much, I dug to the very end. We were digging through sand the whole time and at the bottom there was a dark layer of blackened earth under which a corpse was lying. I saw a military great-coat and the belt as the corpse was lying face downwards. I then tore off the button from the belt, rubbed it clean and saw that it was a button with an eagle on it. I handed over the button to the Germans who had a good look at it. I then wrapped it in paper, we interrupted the work and we drove back."

"When we arrived at Gnezdovo Lt. Voss, Secretary of the Geheime Feldpolizei, came there. I showed Voss the button and I told him that we had dug out a pit, I mentioned that a strong smell of corpses was rising from the pit and because of this Voss took a bottle of alcohol in case somebody felt sick. Then the same people as before and Voss went back to Kose Gory with a car and a motorcycle. When we arrived at the spot Voss gave orders to widen the pit, sever the head from the body and remove it from the pit. Voss examined the head, ordered us to put it back in the pit and to *throw some earth over it*/editor's underlining/. Then Voss walked around in the woods, went across to the other side of the valley beyond the marsh, and after that we returned to Gnezdovo. That same day an Austrian N. C. O. Ponka, by means of an interpreter Arholz, or Eichholz, took a statement from me asking what I knew about the execution of the Polish officers. Together with me they interrogated also Andrejew Ivan from Nove Batoki, nicknamed Rumba."

I should be stressed, that the first depositions taken from witnesses in the Katyn case/Kryvosertsev, Kisselev, Andreyev/and published in Amtliches Material were dated 27th and 28th February 1943/see Facts and Documents p. 301-302/. The first report of the Geheime Feldpolizei mentioned in Amtliches Material was also dated 28th February. Thus the new material of the Katyn case confirms in principle the German story about the discovery the Polish officers graves by the German authorities in the Winter of 1943, probably at the end of February.

Lt. Col. Ahrens O. C. 535 Signals Regiment who was stationed in Dnieper Castle at that time and who was heard by the Nuremberg Tribunal as a witness for the defence on July 1st 1946 confirmed completely the fact that the discovery of the Katyn graves in the Winter of 1943 was accidental. He also stated that already in 1942 there had been rumours among the Germans that, at one time, mass executions had taken place in the Katyn forest and that he had himself

seen a cross on a hill there/namely that erected by the Polish workers/. However, no importance had been attached either to the rumours or to the cross and it was only in January or February 1943 that he had, by chance, become interested in the graves. It had so happened that in the Katyn forest near the Dnieper castle, traces of a wolf had been observed, which it was supposed had dug up one of the graves and come upon human bones. We know from the deposition of the Russian witness cited above that after the test exhumation of the graves by the Geheime Feldpolizei and the discovery of the body, it was only lightly covered up again with earth, which was probably the reason why it was possible for the hungry wolf to smell the corpse and dig it up. This could well have happened before Lt. Col. Ahrens had received information about the existence of the Katyn graves from 2/Lt Voss.

2. *The first German reactions.*

From the report of Prof. G. Buhtz Chief Police Surgeon of the Armeekommando Heeresgruppe Mitte we know that the report by Voss was presented to him already on March 1st 1943/zur weiteren Veranlassung/, and that he became responsible for all further investigation from that day onwards. After having verified on the spot the fact that the data given in the report corresponded to the facts, Prof. Buhtz immediately began the preparations necessary for the exhumation of the bodies from the mass graves after the earth had thawed. On p. 38 of the Amtliches Material we find a description of the preparatory work done during the month of March.

The first judicial statements published in Amtliches Material were dated 18th and 26th April 1943 and signed by Chef Richter Dr. Conrad and Heeres Justiz Amtmann Bornemann. Up to this time all evidence had been taken by the Geheime Feldpolizei.

The German propaganda machine was also given the report of the Geheime Feldpolizei, but there are no data which make it possible for us to say when they began to work on the Katyn case and which of their organs they used, as the German Army had a special propaganda service which was quite distinct from the Ministry of Propaganda. We can, however, safely suppose that 2/Lt. Voss' report was sent to the propaganda officers attached to the H. Q. of the Heeresgruppe Mitte at the same time as it was handed to Prof. Buhtz. They therefore had, like him, roughly six weeks in which to prepare for the public propaganda drive on the 13th April 1943.

A Paris newspaper "Le Monde" in the issue of 1st December 1945 published under the title "Un Document Sensationnel"—"Un Officier Autrichien se vante d'être l'inventeur de Katyn" a telegram revealing that "dans un chateau des environs de Vienne" letters from an Austrian Lt. Sloventzik to his wife and mother in law had been found. The telegram gave a French translation of one of the letters apparently very inaccurate.

We know from the recently received statements of the Polish witnesses that Sloventzik, a journalist from Vienna holding the rank of Lt of the reserve, was attached to the propaganda service of the H. Q. Heeresgruppe Mitte in Smolensk. He had the Katyn case specially assigned to him and, in fact, played an extremely important role at Katyn. He spent whole days in the Katyn forest representing, together with 2/Lt. Voss, the German authorities and acting as guide to various visiting parties. Despite the fact that he is to be seen in the majority of the German photographs of Katyn his name was not mentioned in Amtliches Material and did not appear in our Facts and Documents.

A member of the first Polish "delegation"^{*} which went to Katyn on April 10th, 1943 /see Facts and Documents p. 226 and fol./ said, in a statement made in London, that after their arrival at Smolensk "in the evening in the officers mess three officers from the propaganda unit of the Smolensk Army, two lieutenants and one captain were introduced to us.

The Katyn case was explained to us by Lt. Sloventzik, an officer of the reserve, supposedly a journalist by profession living in Vienna. Of the two others one introduced himself as a sculptor from Innsbruck. A Lt. with the badges of the Geheime Feldpolizei listened to the conversation from time to time and I suppose

^{*} On the April 9th the German authorities in Warsaw invited certain people, town clerks, representatives of the clergy and the press, and of the Principal Council for Social Welfare to a meeting and just before it began the President of the Polish Red Cross. Those invited were informed about the discovery in Katyn of the mass graves of murdered Polish Officers and German authorities then suggested that a delegation of the Polish Red Cross should be sent to the spot. The Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross refused to agree to the suggestion as they regarded the whole affair as a German propaganda trick. As a result the German authorities sent to Katyn on April 10th a party of people from Warsaw and Cracow chosen by themselves. This party was afterwards referred to by the German press and radio as the Polish "delegation".

he was the Voss about whom I heard later. Sloventzik gave us more details about Katyn and showed us photographs of the woods and the bodies as well as of the documents found on the bodies. He also showed us some of the original documents already disinfected . . ."

Finally, a Polish witness, who as a member of the technical commission of the Polish Red Cross spent more than six weeks in Katyn and therefore had the opportunity of getting to know Lt. Sloventzik better gives the following description of him. "Lt. Sloventzik a journalist from Vienna by profession, who actually lived in Smolensk, came to the Katyn forest every day both in the morning and in the afternoon. Lt. Sloventzik devoted himself entirely to exploiting the Katyn case to the greatest possible extent from the point of view of the German propaganda . . . As Lt. Sloventzik was present in Katyn in his capacity as local representative of the German authorities I had to be in contact with him rather often. There were disputes between us more than once particularly on account of the fact, that, as the Katyn graves were being emptied in the course of our work the number of exhumed bodies was still very far from the 12,000 given out by the German propaganda."

A member of the first Polish "delegation" to Katyn when giving a detailed description of his sojourn there gives interesting information about the extent to which Lt. Sloventzik knew the details about the "loss" of the Polish officers whose bodies were found in Katyn: "The second point which is much more interesting than the first one /the story of the discovery of the graves /was that Sloventzik although always inclined to give the most dramatic presentation of the case /from the Polish point of view/ had no idea from where the bodies of the murdered officers could have come. From the depositions of the local inhabitants he only knew that the convoys had come from Smolensk. As he already had photographs and even the originals of some of the letters and postcards found on the bodies he asked us why so many of them were addressed to Kozielsk. I told him briefly what I knew about Kozielsk and also about Starobielsk and Ostashkov and watched his reaction closely. This was very strong and gave me a quite definite impression that Sloventzik had information about Kozielsk only from us. It was also the only bit of the conversation which he made a note of. A few minutes later, after we had finished our conversation, I heard that he had passed on the information about Kozielsk to Olenbusch /of the propaganda department of the General Government/ and to other Germans."

While 2/Lt. Voss was organising teams of diggers and providing guards from the local Russian inhabitants and Prof. Buhtz was making all the preparations for the commencement of the medico-legal work on the large scale, those responsible for propaganda should have, with the aid of the Intelligence service and the police collected the most detailed possible data on the subject of the origin of the graves and the bodies therein, as this was essential to the efficient working of the propaganda drive. The conversation with Lt. Sloventzik on 10th of April, mentioned above, would seem to indicate that this preparatory work was not in fact done by the propaganda service. Six weeks after the discovery of the bodies the "inventor" of Katyn knew nothing about them except that they were the bodies of Polish officers killed by the Bolsheviks. It is highly probable that Lt. Sloventzik's superiors were no better informed.

This would explain the form and contents of the first official German communique on Katyn. It was published by the Deutsches Nachrichten Büro in an apparently very careless manner on the 13th of April 1943 and it contained several drastic contradictions and inaccuracies. Evidently the officials of the Ministry of Propaganda had no precise knowledge either of the history of the missing Polish POW's in the USSR or the details of the Katyn discovery and they tried to cover up this lack of factual information with glaringly demagogic phraseology. They did not know the details about the discovery of the graves and on this point gave to some extent conflicting versions/see the paragraph 1 and 3 of the communique/. They appeared to be ignorant of the topography of the locality where the graves were discovered as they used different geographical names. They did not even know the exact number of the graves discovered nor the state they were in; and they made a mistake as to the age of the spruces planted on the graves. They ignored the real history of the Polish POW's in the USSR and based their story on scraps on information obtained from the Geheime Feldpolizei which had questioned the local inhabitants. Consequently, they gave the number of murdered Polish officers as being "over 10,000" and the population of Kozielsk camp as being "über 60.000 Gefangene Polnische Soldaten" which was completely wrong and they made no mention of Starobielsk and Ostashkov /see the last paragraph of the communique/.

II. THE WORK OF EXHUMATION AND THE PART PLAYED IN IT BY THE POLISH RED CROSS.

1. *The decision to send the delegate of the Polish Red Cross*

The Germans knew few details about the bodies found in the Katyn graves but they had no doubt as to the fact that they were the bodies of Polish officers. Consequently the only preparation made by the German propaganda, prior to the disclosure of the Katyn discovery, was an attempt to gain the collaboration of those people who were directly interested, namely the Poles.

The Polish nation was mercilessly exploited and persecuted by the Germans but it persisted in its indomitable general resistance and the underground struggle had the support of the whole nation. Nevertheless it could be foreseen that the news of the murder of thousands of Polish prisoners by the Soviets would be a serious shock. Meanwhile the cooperation of the Poles being, as they were, the only competent and trustworthy witnesses to the fact that the Katyn discovery was a reality and not merely an invention of Dr. Goebbels, was extremely desirable if not absolutely necessary.

With this end in view the Berlin Ministry of Propaganda sent special emissaries to the chief towns of the Polish General Government just before the disclosure of the Katyn discovery. There, in closed conferences which were attended by specially summoned individuals, they communicated the news of the Katyn discovery. In this way they hoped to obtain witnesses who would be acceptable to world opinion, by inviting them to go to Katyn. Both the news and the invitations were received with great scepticism. It was felt, however, that the information should be verified. Several of the people invited asked for a decision of the Polish underground authorities on this matter and obtained their consent to go. Among those who also went to Katyn were members of the families of some of the exhumed victims, a trusted emissary of archbishop Sapieha from Cracow and members of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross *, as the work of this organisation included the protection of POW's, keeping in contact with them and the care of the graves of men killed in action.

The Germans on their assumption that the sovereign Polish State had ceased to exist, refused to allow the Polish Red Cross to exercise its normal functions and refused to recognise the rights due to it under international law. On the other hand they did not decide to liquidate it entirely. Consequently during the German occupation the existence of the Polish Red Cross was tolerated but its activities were confined territorially within the boundaries of the General Government and as far as its work was concerned to the care of the disabled soldiers of the September campaign. An Office of Information still remained doing what it could for the protection of POW's and meeting with great chicanery on the part of the Germans.

The unfriendly attitude of the Germans to the Polish Red Cross was the reason why, when organising the first conference on Katyn on April 9th 1943, /see the footnote on p. 9./ they did not immediately invite representatives from it. Only at the last moment the President of the Polish Red Cross Mr. Lachert was summoned by telephone to the meeting. When he declared that he would be able to be present only after one hour he was told that in that case he would be too late. On the afternoon of the same day he received another telephone call informing him of the decision to send a delegation to Katyn and pointing out that "a seat on the plane which is to start for Smolensk on the next day /April 10th/ at 8 a. m. has been reserved for the President of The Polish Red Cross." /From the confidential report on the part played by the Polish Red Cross in the work of exhumation in Katyn near Smolensk for the period April-June 1943 presented by order of the Polish Red Cross/.

The Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross treated the whole affair as a German propaganda trick and decided not to send anybody and the Polish Red Cross was, in fact, not represented among the group of people who flew to Katyn on the 10th of April.

In face of this negative attitude taken by the President of the Polish Red Cross the Germans began talks with the representatives of the Polish Red Cross District in Cracow and after a few days renewed their attempts to gain its cooperation.

The confidential report of the Polish Red Cross reads: "On the morning of April the 14th Dr. Grunmann from the Propaganda Department of the Warsaw District came to the Polish Red Cross office and presented the President with a verbal summons urging him to send a "delegation" of the Executive Committee of the

* See the footnote on p. 9.

Polish Red Cross consisting of three people, that very day at 13 o'clock /1 p. m./ by 'plane to Smolensk. At the same time he mentioned that Mr. Plappert Plenipotentiary of the Polish Red Cross Executive Committee for the Cracow District and his deputy Dr. Szebesta were leaving Cracow in the morning by the same plane together with the representatives of the clergy chosen by the Archbishop. The Executive Committee immediately made an attempt to contact Dr. Szebesta in Cracow by telephone but it appeared that he had already left the office."

In these circumstances the Executive Committee after a short discussion due to lack of time, took the decision which subsequently formed the basis of their policy with regard to the Katyn case.

According to the confidential report this policy was based on the following premises.

1/ The request to send a delegation of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross should be absolutely opposed as such a delegation would bear a propagandist character and it would directly serve the political aims of German propaganda in which the Polish Red Cross should not play any part and from which it must cut itself off completely.

2/ The identification of the bodies in the mass graves was absolutely necessary both for the Office of Information of the Polish Red Cross and for the thousands of Polish families directly concerned.

3/ The Polish Red Cross guaranteed that the work of exhumation, identification and burial of such a great number of bodies would be conducted with due care and piety.

4/ In view of the above it was considered advisable for the Polish Red Cross to send to Smolensk a Technical Committee within the frame-work of the organisation of the Office of Information and thus free from any propagandist character. Its preliminary task would be to enquire, on the spot, if and under what conditions the Polish Red Cross could undertake the work and responsibility of the exhumation.

5/ The exceptionally difficult task of this initial Committee and the compulsory presence of two high officials of the Polish Red Cross in Cracow on this expedition called for complete uniformity in the attitude of the entire Committee to the German propaganda efforts which could be foreseen and in face of other different eventualities which could not be predicted. This could be effected by sending one member of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross in the capacity of a responsible member of the Committee whose task would be to install the Technical Committee on the spot and to immediately present a report to the Executive Committee.

The German Authorities were officially informed:

"The Presidium of the Executive Committee has decided to send to Smolensk 5 people from Warsaw comprising a Technical Committee consisting of 4 people who, if necessary, will remain on the spot and Mr. Skarzynski member and Secretary of the Executive Committee. In view of the fact, however, that the German Authorities have deprived the Polish Red Cross of all its responsibilities including the care of the graves, with the exception of those activities undertaken by the Office of Information Mr. Skarzynski is authorized to act only within the frame-work of the said Office of Information."

It can be seen from the above official resolution and from its confidential premises that the attitude of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross to the Germans was one of the great reserve and caution. Its aim was to do nothing which could serve the purpose of German propaganda and at the same time to do such positive work as was appropriate to its statutory tasks.

In accordance with the policy thus framed the representative of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross declared to Lt. Sloventzik who was representing the German Military Authorities there, on his arrival at Smolensk on April the 15th 1943 that he had come there "only to investigate the graves and to install the Technical Committee which in 2 or 3 days will be able to decide on the extent of the work needed to be done on the graves by the Polish Red Cross. This work will consist in identification of the bodies, reburying them in new graves, taking charge of their possessions and handing them over to the families of the murdered men."

To this he received the answer that "German Military Authorities will give the Polish Red Cross every assistance."

In fact as is stated by a member of the Technical Committee "in the normal course of work done by us the Germans were in general not obstructive, leaving leaving considerable freedom to the Technical Committee and limiting them-

selves to the supervision of our heavy and extremely unpleasant work." The statement adds: "During our stay we felt the whole time that we were under secret German observation but no restrictions or restraints were placed upon us."

After his return to Warsaw the representative of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross presented a report to the Executive Committee on his stay in Katyn/discussed in Facts and Documents p. 231/. As a result the Executive Committee, considering the case to be a very urgent one, sent already on April 19th 1943 three more members to the Technical Committee from Warsaw.

Finally on April the 28th two further members of the Technical Committee went to Katyn by plane together with an expert in forensic medicine, assistant at the Jagellonian University and a member of the staff of the Institute for Forensic Medicine in Cracow Dr. M. Wodzinski accompanied by his three laboratory assistants.

Thus the total number of people sent to Katyn as members of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross rose to 12. As, however, two people returned to Warsaw at the end of April and a third in the middle of May the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross in Katyn during the period of effective work i. e. during May and the first days of June 1943 consisted of 9-10 people.

2. *The work of exhumation before the arrival of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross*

During the period before the arrival of the first members of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross at Katyn on April 15th 1943 the exhumations there were conducted exclusively by the Germans, using Russian civilian workers under the general technical supervision of 2/Lt. Voss of the Geheime Feldpolizei. Voss made 7 reports on the progress of the preparations for the exhumations and on the exhumations themselves. These were dated February 28th 1943 /the first report on the discovery of the graves/, March 4th, 27th and 31st and April 3rd, 10th and 13th. Only two of these reports those of 27th March and 10th April were published in Amtliches Material entirely or in part. Of the others we find only a mention in a deposition made by Voss before the judicial authorities of the Army on 26th April 1943 /Amtliches Material-document Nr.1/.

From the report of March 27th 1943 we know that the preparatory work on the exhumations had already been completed at that time and that on the March 29th 1943 35 civilian workers brought from neighbouring villages were to start removing the upper layer of earth from grave Nr 1. According to this report it was supposed that this work would take 5 days /see Amtliches Material p. 16/.

After the removal of about 2 metres of earth and the uncovering of the whole surface of grave Nr 1 /8 x 23 m—Amtl. Mat. p. 16/ the top-most layer of 250 bodies was exhumed and the bodies were laid out in the clearing between the short arm of grave Nr 1 and the road through the wood. In order to establish the actual depth of grave Nr 1 a pit was dug out at the end of the shorter arm of this grave right to the bottom and 12 layers of bodies were revealed one on top of the other. This work supplied the basis for the calculation of the number of bodies contained in this grave. It was given by the Germans as 3.000 /250 x 12/—report of April 10th 1943—/Amtl. Mat. p. 32/.

Independently and most probably at the same time as the work was going on grave Nr 1 work was being conducted also with the view to discovering and uncovering further graves. We know from the reports of April 10th 1943, published in Amtliches Material /documents 6 and 12/ that already before the disclosure of the Katyn revelations the Germans knew of the existence of all 7 Polish graves /and of the 4 Russian graves situated in the triangle formed by the roads through the woods /see Facts and Documents p. 309/ although not all the graves were at that time completely uncovered. The report of April 10th 1943 describes them in the following manner:

"Der mit 2 bis 7 bezeichnete Gelandeteil wurde an einigen Stellen aufgedigert und diese Stellen miteinander verbunden" /Amtliches Material p. 32/.

A member of the first Polish "delegation" of April 10th 1943 gives in his depositions made in London the following account of the stage of the exhumations at that time:

"The next morning we went by car to Kose Gory. After having turned into the woods we left the car near a large excavation. This was a long trench most probably dug out along the whole length of the grave and right to the bottom but as the limbs and heads of bodies left at the side showed, not for the whole breadth. The section showed that the bodies were lying in a quite orderly manner piled one on top of the other in several layers. The upper layers of the grave dug out in the hilly terrain of Kose Gory were of dry clayey-sandy earth but subsoil

water was seeping into the lower part. We were shown the work begun nearby on the second grave where only the top layers of bodies were uncovered. Local Russians were working at both graves lifting out the bodies.

"After that we visited the whole area of the graves and we soon learned to discern the graves not yet uncovered. They were slightly sunk at the edges, the surface was not level and moreover they were overgrown with young spruces which were undoubtedly planted intentionally on the top of the graves. These small trees, all of the same height, stood out quite distinctly from the background of the forest which was a neglected and wild but not very old spruce grove. The spruces planted on the graves gave the impressions of being healthy and well rooted trees and they must have been growing on the graves for more than one year."

The first communique of Deutsches Nachrichten Büro stated that "up till now two great mass graves have been found and further test digging has shown the existence of at least two more graves."

An article of Robert Broess of April 12th 1943 published in the Argentine newspaper "El Pampero" also spoke about two grave-trenches only, referring moreover to conversations with Prof. Buhtz in which 5 more test diggings were mentioned which points to the existence of further graves /see Facts and Documents p 239/.

The work of removing the 2 mtr thick covering of earth was not easy and took much time. The member of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross who arrived at Katyn on April 29th 1943 states that at that time "the graves which were subsequently numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 were already completely uncovered in such a manner that the whole covering of earth was removed and the upper-most layer of bodies completely exposed. From the graves subsequently numbered 5, 6, and 7 the covering of earth was just being removed and the graves themselves were already partly exposed."

We see from the above that in the first period of exhumation conducted by the Germans without the participation of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross, two or even three graves were completely uncovered. The remaining four or five graves were, it is true discovered and exposed by means of so called test section but the covering of earth was not yet completely removed from the graves which gave the members of the Technical Committee the opportunity of seeing some graves practically untouched by the Germans.

A member of the first Polish "delegation" of April 10th-1943 states that during his stay in Katyn "the work was only in a preliminary stage. In the clearing in the woods near the graves about 200 bodies taken out of the grave were lying awaiting post mortem examination. The bodies were numbered and laid out in several rows. Near Dr. Buhtz's hut a number of bodies were lying here and there which had apparently already been examined by Dr. Buhtz. On the trees and the branches items of uniform taken from the bodies were hanging. The whole made an impression of work just began and not yet properly organised."

The representative of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross who arrived at Katyn on April 16th referred in his report presented to the Executive Committee to "about 300 bodies having been taken out up till now." This number was confirmed in the report of the Polish officers, POW's in Germany who were brought to Katyn on April 17th 1943.

Finally the exact number of bodies exhumed at Katyn by the Germans without the assistance of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross was given in the "list of the order of burial" which was attached to the "report of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross" on its work in Katyn.

In the chapter entitled "Grave 1" it was reported that in the period 22nd-24th April in all 310 bodies were reburied in this grave "partly without the assistance of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross, only by the German military personnel", of which 112 had no list numbers and 198 were numbered consecutively 3-200 inclusive /the two first list numbers were allocated to the bodies of Gen. Smorawinski and Gen. Bohatyrewicz which were buried in separate graves/.

This last document confirms the impression already mentioned that the German exhumations "were not yet properly organised." The Germans, known for their pedantry and love of system, were not able in the few weeks available to organise properly the work of exhumation with the result that over a hundred bodies had no list numbers and did not appear in the German official list of exhumed bodies. For unknown reasons the first numbering of exhumed bodies was stopped at number 112 and a new numerical series was began starting with number "01" with the result that 112 numbers were completely omitted.

The fact that the Germans although able to call upon the necessary labour were yet unable to organise properly the exhumations was the reason all the work went into Polish hands.

3. *The organisation of the work undertaken by the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross*

The first three members of the Technical Committee arrived at Katyn on April 16th 1943 and intended to set to work on the very next day organising it in the following way. One of them was to work at deciphering the documents found on the bodies in the office of the Feldpolizei at Grushtshenki, the two others were to search for and preserve the documents on the bodies in the Katyn forest.

The arrival on that day of the "delegation" of Polish officer-prisoners from German Oflag and the visits of foreign journalists on the 20th of April 1943 as well as some technical difficulties which could not be solved before Lt. Sloventzik had been contacted, resulted in a delay of some days of the work of exhumation being taken over by the Technical Committee. Meanwhile on the 20th of April three more Poles arrived and on the 28th came the Polish expert in forensic medicine with two qualified prosecutors and three Polish Red Cross officials. This increase of the number of the members of the Committee made a better organisation of work possible. Thus approximately from the first of May the work of exhumation was done in the following consecutive stages:

- a/ the digging up and lifting out of the bodies,
- b/ the examination by the doctor and in certain cases the performing of the post mortem on unidentified corpses,
- c/ the searching of the bodies and the removal of the documents,
- d/ the reburial of the bodies,
- e/ the examination of the documents found on the bodies.

All this work was performed under Polish management and German supervision, which was assigned to the N. C. O.'s of the Feldpolizei who confined themselves to watching the work without interfering with it.

Many conflicts resulted from the basically different attitude taken to the work at Katyn by the Poles and Germans. The Poles were wholly interested in the work of exhumation, identification and reburial of the bodies being performed with the greatest possible piety and in a conscientious, orderly and efficient manner: the Germans were only interested to exploit the situation as far as they were able for the purpose of political propaganda. But over to the technical side of the exhumation and identification work which lasted for more than one month the Technical Committee had no serious dispute with the Germans.

The members of the Technical Committee were provided with arms bands of the Red Cross and were given complete freedom to move over the whole terrain of the Katyn forest and to contact freely the inhabitants and the Todt organisation workers. The ban on taking photographs at Katyn, promulgated by Voss, did not apply to them. This freedom was granted somewhat ostentatiously to impress the visiting parties coming to Katyn.

In principle, the working day of the Committee lasted from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m. with an hour and a half for lunch. But the visiting parties coming continually to Katyn often interfered with this time table and were the subject of several discussions between the Technical Committee and the German Authorities. Eventually, visits to the scene of the crime were confined to certain hours which were not however always strictly kept. Particularly was the work of the Committee disorganised when important delegations arrived.

The Germans usually did not directly stop the work but interrupted it by not supplying workers on some days. Special difficulties were often experienced with Russian POW's who were employed digging new communal graves and reburying those bodies already examined by the Technical Committee. The members of the Committee did not believe in Sloventzik's explanation that he had difficulties in securing prisoners. They believed that the Germans deliberately retarded the reburying of the exhumed bodies in order to make a greater impression on the parties visiting Katyn. The keeping of unburied bodies on the surface for several days made the already heavy work still harder.

We will now proceed to a detailed description of the work of the Technical Committee.

a/ *Digging up and lifting out of the bodies.*—Local civilian workers dug up the graves under the supervision of members of the Technical Committee. They worked in teams of two and the average number of teams working at the same time in the graves was three. The rest of the workers were employed carrying away the bodies. When lifting the bodies the workers used iron hooks with the aid of which they were able to detach the individual corpses from the conglomerated mass. As well as hooks they also used shovels and sometimes even picks because in certain cases the bodies were so firmly stuck together that they could not be separated in any other way. The Committee would have preferred the

bodies to have been lifted out by hand in order to avoid damaging them especially in cases where they were not lying in orderly layers, but they had to agree to tools being used. The fact that the bodies were so firmly jammed together precluded any suspicion of the bodies exhumed by the Technical Committee having been previously disturbed.

After the separation of the individual bodies from the mass they were placed on wooden stretchers, lifted to the surface, and laid in rows on the ground. Usually 70-150 bodies were lifted out in one day, the average number being about 100. In principle, The Technical Committee endeavoured to rebury the bodies on the same day as they were lifted out and in the same order, in new communal graves which however, for the reasons mentioned above, was not always possible. As a result there were often several hundred unburied corpses lying about.

b/ *Medical examination and post mortems.*—At the beginning of his work with the Technical Committee the Polish expert in forensic medicine examined all bodies without exception. The following is an excerpt from his deposition made in London.

"I performed them, /the examinations/ as a rule, with the help of Ferdinand Plonka. During these examinations, after having shaved off the hair on the back of the head we found, generally, at about the breadth of two fingers below the occipital protuberance most often in the middle line of the body an entry wound in the form of a roundish aperture with the diameter of about 8 mm. After cutting the skin at the back of the head it could be seen that the bullet channel usually ran forwards and upwards into the cranial cavity through the base of the occipital bone. After the entry aperture had been cleaned from soft tissues its diameter was measured by means of a metal rule and generally not quite 8 mm. The entry aperture was characterised by even outer edges which expanded crater-like towards the interior of the cranium. After the examination of the entry wound we looked for the exit wound which was almost always located on the forehead of the victim, more or less at the edge of the scalp, sometimes in the middle line of the body and sometimes a little to the right or left. The exit wounds were characterised by greater dimensions than those made by the bullets entry, their diameter attaining the breadth of sometimes 15mm, by uneven edges and sometimes by the presence of small bonesplinters in them. After the measurement of the dimensions of the wound the skin was cut open and the edges of the bone aperture were cleansed from soft tissues and the exit aperture of the frontal bone was examined By means of a probe the direction of the shot was determined and it was established that it had usually damaged the vital centres in the medulla causing the instantaneous death of the victim. In some cases the cranial cavity was opened up and the preagonal reaction established which took the form of large rust-coloured hemochromogen deposits at the base, on account of the hemorrhage into the cranial cavity. Often after the skin and the soft tissues had been cut, bloody stains were found in the vicinity of the entry wounds Then the length of the body was measured and it was examined for other lesions in particular for lesions which would testify to a struggle having taken place before death with an aggressor."

The Polish doctor in Katyn after having examined 800 bodies in the manner described above stopped, in the first half of May, further examination of all bodies without exception and confined himself to a detailed examination of only those bodies on which no documents had been found and which had been listed as unidentified. He had been forced to do this because the original plan of the Polish Red Cross to send at least three forensic medicine experts to Katyn had not been carried out despite all the insistent endeavours of the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw.

With reference to the unidentified bodies the doctor further states. "In these cases I measured the length of the body and gave the dental particulars, in particular the number of false teeth, and the age on the basis of the length of the marrow-cavity within the head of the humerus. I also described the clothes and paid special attention to monograms and trademarks and I paid attention, in general, to all the data which could have been of use for identification purposes. In cases where the length of the body could not be established because of the great degree of putrid decomposition I measured the length of the two long bones in order to determine later the approximate length of the body by means of the formula accepted by forensic medicine. In the more interesting cases which differed from the norm I took photographs."

Detailed dissections of bodies were not, as a rule, made as during the examination the cause of death, namely the shot in the back of the head, was established without doubt. Independently of the Polish doctors examinations individual

bodies were examined and sometimes also dissected by German doctors, Dr. Schmidt, Dr. Müller, Dozent Dr. Huber. For several weeks at the end, there also worked at Katyn, a Dozent of chemistry of one of the German universities whose name was Specht and who made a detailed chemical research and in particular measured the acidity of samples of earth taken from different layers in the graves and their vicinity. From this research it was discovered that in the upper layers of the graves the reactions of the earth showed a slight alkaline content but the earth gave a decidedly acid reaction the deeper the layer. The attitude of the above mentioned German doctors to the members of the Polish Technical Committee was courteous and they communicated to them the results of their research.

Prof. Buhtz himself, during the period of the work of the Technical Committee at Katyn, came irregularly from Smolensk, usually when more important parties and delegations visited the place of the crime. According to the opinion of the Polish doctor Prof. Buhtz treated the work being done at Katyn exclusively as a man of science and because of this he even had some disputes with the local chief of the German propaganda.

c/ *Searching of the bodies.*—Independently of the medico-legal examinations all the bodies removed from the graves were minutely searched and everything which could be of any importance for identification purposes was taken off them. The members of the Technical Committee, assisted by two Russian civilian workers, slit open all the pockets of the clothes taken off the bodies with knives and took out all the contents passing them to other members of the Technical Committee. These, after examining them, put them into numbered envelopes. Other objects, for example Polish pre-war bank notes, were left on the spot as were also the newspapers which were very often found with the bodies. All these newspapers were dated March and April 1940. They were Soviet newspapers, mostly Głos Radziecki /Soviet Voice/, which was published in Polish in Kiev.

"Because there was such a large number of these newspapers" states a member of the Technical Committee "only a few copies were kept and the rest were left for a long time scattered about in the clearing near the graves. Then, after the emptying of the original graves, the newspapers and the other rubbish was thrown back and the graves were filled up again."

From the bodies on which no documents were found which could be used for identification purposes or, at least, as evidence of the military rank, one epaulette was taken and put into the envelope. At the same time a number corresponding to that on the envelope was stamped on a metal disc and pinned on to the uniform, at the breast of the body, by the Russian civilian workers. In cases where the bodies had decomposed to an exceptional degree the metal numbers were fixed to the bones of the corpses by means of a wire. Because in some cases razors, penknives, valuables and documents were found in the legs of the boots these were generally slit open and examined.

It should be stressed that the members of the Technical Committee did not conduct their inspection of the documents found nor did they identify the bodies or list them on the spot, near the graves. The numbered envelopes in which the objects found on the bodies had been placed were laid on a table in rows and, when work ceased every evening, were collected by a German dispatch rider on a motor cycle who, often accompanied by a member of the Technical Committee took them to a house 5-6 kilometres in the direction of Smolensk where the Commission was located which was drawing up the identification list of the bodies and of the objects and documents found on them.

d/ *The reburial of the bodies.*—The bodies having been examined and provided with metal discs were then reburied in new communal graves dug out by Soviet prisoners brought from Smolensk by the Germans. The original plans made for burying the exhumed bodies in individual graves had to be abandoned in view of the technical difficulties and the Technical Committee was forced to agree to new communal graves. The only exceptions were made in the case of two of the identified generals—Smorawinski and Bohatyrewicz.

The new communal graves were situated in the clearing between the shorter arm of grave Nr 1 and the road through the wood. The ground on both sides of the communal graves was low and marshy but the graves themselves were made on higher ground which was dry and sandy. The size and the depth of each grave was not the same on account of topographical conditions and technical difficulties which arose in the course of the work. The bottom of each grave was perfectly dry and each of them, according to its size and depth, contained several rows of bodies in each layer. The graves were filled in in such a way that the upper layers of bodies were covered with the metres of earth. All the graves were levelled at

the same height and had the sides turfed. On every grave was placed a wooden cross two and a half metres high under which a few wild flowers were planted. On the surface of each grave was put a large turf cross. The graves were numbered in the same order as they were made. The bodies were placed with the heads to the East, one on top of the other, the heads somewhat raised and the arms crossed. Each layer of bodies was covered with 20-30 centimetres of earth. A member of the Technical Committee supervised the placing of the bodies in the graves in their order on the list. As it was planned to take the bodies back to Poland, detailed plans of the graves and the place of each numbered corpse in them were drawn up. The cemetery when finished occupied a square of 60 x 36 metres. The first grave was completed by the Germans without the participation of the Technical Committee on April 24th, the second on May 5th, the third on May 12th, the fourth on May 24th, the fifth on June 1st and the sixth on June 7th. The location and the dimensions of the graves will be found on the attached plan.

e/ *The examination of the documents found on the bodies.*—The Germans had established a temporary laboratory where the Katyn documents could be deciphered, in a wooden house of several rooms occupied by the Feldpolizei which was situated in the locality of Grushtshenki, about 5-6 kilometres in the direction of Smolensk. The members of the Technical Committee worked at the deciphering of the documents in the laboratory which was situated on a glassed-in veranda, under the supervision of a German NCO of the Geheime Feldpolizei who was billeted in the same house. He was assisted by another German who took his place in case of need. There was also a woman Volksdeutsch working on the veranda well acquainted with the Polish language who translated on the spot the more important documents, especially the diaries of the victims, into German.

2/ Lt. Voss lived near the house and also supervised the work in the laboratory. It was by his orders that all the foreign money and valuables found on the bodies were retained in the house while the other objects and the documents were put into the numbered envelopes which were then placed in serial order in wooden cases.

The work in the laboratory was organised as follows. All the objects from each envelope brought from Katyn were taken out and listed. Then on the basis of the personal documents found on the body if any and if not on that of the uniform epaulette the military rank and if possible other personal data of the victim was established. The name thus established and the contents of the envelope were catalogued numerically in German by a German NCO.

At the beginning when the Technical Committee's team was small/before May 1st 1943/the lists were drawn up only in the German language/nrs 421-794/ afterwards/from nr 795/the lists were made up in Polish just for the use of the Polish Red Cross, and in German by the German NCO. The identification of the bodies from Nr 1 to 112 and from Nr 01 to 0420 was made by the Germans before the arrival of the Technical Committee. If identification proved impossible a note was made to this effect against the serial number, together with a list of the documents found on the body. Such documents were subsequently sent by the German authorities to a special chemical laboratory for a more scientific examination. After the contents of the envelope have been gone through, the documents and other objects were put into new envelopes which were given the same number and on which the contents were enumerated. This was done by the Germans. The envelopes containing the materials were put into the cases which remained in the exclusive possession of the German authorities. The deciphering of the documents found on the bodies presented much difficulty in view of the fact that in cases where the bodies were partly mummified the documents had become desiccated and the paper, when carelessly handled, disintegrated. Such documents were moistened with water and with the aid of ivory knives the pages were very delicately separated one from another and afterwards deciphered. The documents found on the bodies underwent a partial chemical transformation and were covered with a tiny layer of white wax but after being separated and scraped with small wooden sticks presented no special difficulty in deciphering if they were printed or written with a lead pencil. Writing in ink however had faded completely away and could not be read with the naked eye. Although diaries and other documents of special interest were treated by the Germans with special care and immediately passed over to the woman Volksdeutsch to be translated into German the Polish members of the Technical Committee were able to get a good look at them and in many cases were even able to take exact copies, of them. Besides the diaries the Polish members of the Committee read also letters found on the bodies which had been written by the prisoners but not posted or had been

received by them at Kozielsk. The dates of all these letters according to the deposition of a member of the Technical Committee were not later than April 1940.

4. *The course and the conclusion of the work done by the Committee.*

Up to the middle of May 1943 the bodies were exhumed only from grave Nr 1 and these numbered about 1700. Despite the fact however that the grave Nr 1 was not yet completely emptied the Germans would not permit the removal of some hundreds of bodies still remaining there since for propaganda purposes they wished to have this largest grave open and partially full of bodies. In particular the Germans ordered the preservation of the sap made in the initial stage under the end of the grave, where 12 layers of bodies one on top of the other could be seen. This sap was shown to all visitors to Katyn.

The subordination of the work of exhumation to propaganda purposes resulted in the fact that the further exhumation from the other six graves was carried out at random as the Germans for some time did not allow them to be completely emptied. The Technical Committee however tried to work as systematically as possible and to empty each grave in turn. In general a group of workers having started the work on one grave worked there for the whole day. But because of the relatively small dimensions of the graves other than the graves 1 or 2 two pairs of workers at most could work on the same grave at once. As on an average three pairs of workers were working every day, bodies were often exhumed from two neighbouring graves at the same time which made it difficult to establish which bodies were lifted from which grave.

The member of the Technical Committee in his deposition made in London says: "Grave 3 was emptied first, followed successively by graves 4, 6, and 7. Graves Nr 1, 2, and 5 were emptied later; grave Nr 1 because of its dimensions, grave Nr 2 because of the characteristic arrangement of the bodies and grave Nr 5 because it was flooded with water."

His description of the Katyn graves reads as follows:

"As I have already stated the biggest of all the Katyn graves was grave Nr 1 which was shaped like an 'L'. Its long arm ran along the slope of the Western side of the sandy mound. The upper layer of the grave consisted of airy light sand and below that was layer of sandy clay, and below that again a layer of compact, wet, black peat of which the walls of the lower part of the grave and its bottom was formed. The bottom of the short arm was level but the bottom of the long arm was terraced and there were 5 of these terraces. The depth of the longer arm thus decreased gradually as it sloped downwards and westwards. On the terraces the bodies were laid alternatively in a very orderly manner but higher up they were helter-skelter/like herrings in a barrel'. The bodies in the upper layers were light and fragile and the facial features had disintegrated giving the appearance of a partial mummification. Proceeding gradually downwards and coming to the clayey layer of the grave we found here that the bodies were already well preserved with the facial features distinct and covered over with a whitish layer of sticky grease which had an unpleasant, sharp, putrid smell. This layer of grease protected the bodies from external influence, and was a sign of fatty degeneration. Those bodies within the past layer were relatively the best preserved. They showed only a marked flattening resulting from the great pressure upon them of the upper layers of bodies. Likewise the clothes of the bodies in the upper layers were faded and brittle to the touch becoming progressively stronger the lower the layer.

"As to the more interesting details concerning the bodies in grave Nr 1 it should be stressed that they were dressed in Winter clothes, warm underwear, sweaters and so forth. The wooden soles so called 'apelówki'/parade soles/attached to the shoes were found in relatively great numbers. A number, not very great, of bodies had their arms tied behind the back with a cord."

"Grave Nr 2 had sandy soil only in its upper layers which quickly passed into a clayey layer. In graves Nr 3, 4, 6, and 7 the sandy layer was perhaps a little thicker but underneath it there was a clay as in grave Nr 2."

"The bodies in grave Nr 2 were carefully laid out with the faces downwards and the arms crossed behind the back. Each row was laid in such a way that the faces of one were lying on the thighs of the one below. The bodies in graves Nr 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 were pretty well preserved and had the appearance of partial fatty degeneration. Among other characteristic details, apart from the exceptional packing of the bodies in the grave Nr 2, it should be stressed that all the bodies in graves Nr 6 and 7 had the arms tied behind the back. In all these graves the bodies were also dressed in Winter overcoats and warm underwear and in some cases had wooden 'apelówki' attached to the shoes.

"In grave Nr 2 the bodies were laid in an extremely careful manner which was not met with in other graves and in such a way that all the bodies were lying face down with the arms crossed behind the back. At first glance this arrangement of the bodies might give the impression that the victims had been first led into the grave then pushed over and shot in a prone position. For this reason the Germans drew the attention of visitors especially to this grave Nr 2 and stressed the exceptional cruelty of the crime."

As the graves were being gradually emptied it became, by the second half of May 1943, more and more obvious that the total number of bodies exhumed at Katyn would in no case exceed 4,500. As this was in glaring contradiction to the German propaganda which had put out and continually repeated the figure 12,000 as being the number of Katyn victims, the Germans were faced with the problem of finding a way out of this difficulty.

We do not know who took the decision on this point nor when. It was undoubtedly taken, after some indecision, by the central authorities, the Technical Committee working in Katyn remaining in ignorance of it. On the other hand in Warsaw the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross became aware, at that time, that its direct communication with Katyn was completely cut off. The "Confidential Report" of the Polish Red Cross stresses that the Germans had promised originally that "the Polish Red Cross will be able to have the use of one plane a week, and correspondence will be delivered to the spot by field post after three days." After, however, the return in the middle of May 1943 "to Warsaw of one of the members of the Technical Committee a period of subterfuge began." The final complement of the Technical Committee together with its new chief which had to go to Katyn, waited in vain for a plane and "daily telephone conversations with Mr. Heinrich gave no other answer than that the plane will go any day."

The report goes on: "At last at the May 20th Mr. Heinrich said confidentially that the military authorities had decided to interrupt the work at Katyn before the end of the month so that the journey thither, of the new chief, would be unnecessary. Dr. Grundmann, on being questioned by me several days later, said that he knew nothing at all about it and promised to get into touch immediately with the Smolensk army and find out if such an order had been given."

Obviously the Germans realised that a sudden and objectively unfounded "interruption" of the Technical Committee's work of exhumation at Katyn would, in view of the world publicity that it had received, have a very a bad effect so they did not wish to take a decision overhastily. On the other hand they deliberately rejected the possibility of disclosing the true number of bodies in the Katyn graves and thereby admitting their propaganda to be lying on this point. As a result, as well as deciding to isolate the Technical Committee at Katyn, they must have taken another "temporary" decision, namely to look for further graves in the Katyn woods which would increase the total number of Katyn victims. It must be stressed that in this period, contrary to that before the Katyn revelations, the Germans were accurately informed about the details of the "loss" of the Polish officers in the USSR. Through the communique of the Polish Minister of National Defense of the 17th April 1943/see Facts and Doc. p. 250/and other Polish publications, both official and unofficial, they knew of the three great camps of Polish prisoners in the USSR—Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. As, up till that time, all the bodies exhumed at Katyn had been of victims from Kozielsk it could have been supposed, on the assumption that Katyn forest was the only place where Polish officers in the USSR were murdered, that there were other groups of graves, namely, those of the inmates of Starobielsk and Ostashkov:

Thus, in the second half of May 1943 the Technical Committee noticed that the Germans were beginning an intensive search in the forest for further graves. For this purpose they principally used the method of sounding the earth in the suspected spots with iron sticks. In the beginning, this work gave no results but in the last days of May, when the Technical Committee was already finishing the emptying of graves 1 and 2, two small graves containing less than twenty bodies each, in a condition of a considerable decomposition, were discovered. There were situated near the small path in the wood in the direction of the Dnieper about 350 metres from the sandy mound in which were the other Polish graves, in the middle of a spruce grove 20-30 years old. The surface above the graves at the time of the discovery was covered with a thick layer of pine needles. On closer inspection of the bodies it was, however, stated that they were not the bodies of Polish officers but of Soviet citizens, some of whom were in Soviet uniforms on which there was green and red braid.

"Among the bodies clad in civilian clothes of Soviet type"—reports the doctor of the Technical Committee—"were found also the bodies of several women in

typical Russian high boots with sloping tops and high cuban heels. Judging by the degree of decomposition of the bodies I fixed the age of those in one grave at about 10 years and in the other grave at about 5-7 years. All these bodies also had bullet wounds with the entry apertures in the occipital bone and the exit apertures somewhere in the frontal bone. No cartridge cases were found in these graves and on the basis of the dimensions of the entry apertures the caliber of the bullets should be calculated as being not more than 8 m/m.

At that time, towards the end of May 1943, activity on the Eastern front increased and the front appeared to be moving westwards so that at Katyn the sound of guns was growing greater and greater. In the last days of May there was a night raid of several dozen Soviet planes which destroyed German supply stores between Katyn forest and Gnezdovo station, some bombs falling in the vicinity of Katyn forest. For that reason the members of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross began to feel more and more uneasy at Katyn fearing their fate in the event of the Katyn area being occupied in a Soviet offensive. Their representatives went to Lt. Sloventzik and told him that the work of the Committee, being practically finished, they intended to terminate it definitely in the next few days and they would then wish to return home. Lt. Sloventzik replied to this that the number of exhumed bodies was definitely too small and that there must be still more graves of Polish officers in the Katyn forest area and the Committee should therefore wait for the final results of the search then going on.

During the discussion Lt. Sloventzik asked, among other things, that the Technical Committee should give, in their final report, the figure of 12,000 as the probable final total of Katyn bodies.

"When resisting this suggestion" reports the Polish doctor "I asked on what basis I could give such an untruthful figure, Lt. Sloventzik stressed that if the German authorities gave such a figure no one must be allowed to question it, as if they did, he might have to pay with his head. At that the conversation was interrupted but I personally realized what a dangerous situation I and the whole Technical Committee was in."

At the time of the conversation with Lt. Sloventzik all the Katyn graves except grave 5 were already empty. Grave Nr 5 lying as it did at the lowest level, just at the edge of the marsh had for some time been 2/3 full of subsoil water. The high level of the water made the exhumation of the bodies impossible so that only those few had been taken out which had risen to the surface. Because of this, already in the middle of May, the Technical Committee had turned to Lt. Sloventzik and 2/Lt. Voss and asked them to provide a pump with which to remove the water covering the bodies. They were promised then that a pump would be provided by the fire station in Smolensk. But although several weeks elapsed a pump was not supplied. As the exhumation work was drawing to a close in the remaining graves the Poles insisted more and more vehemently that the German authorities should provide the promised pump. But on this point a passive or even obstructionist attitude on the part of both Sloventzik and Voss could be definitely felt. As a result of some hot days at the end of May the subsoil water in grave 5 fell considerably but even so the bodies remaining there still stuck in the mud.

"On the 30th or 31st May" states the Polish doctor quoted above "I noticed that the Russian civilians working in Katyn started to fill in grave Nr 5 which had, until then, remained open. Asked why they were doing it they replied that they had received an order to this effect from the German officers Sloventzik and Voss. In view of this I immediately went to Lt. Sloventzik to intervene and ask him to countermand the order given to the Russian workers, because the Technical Committee wished to exhume all the bodies of Polish officers at Katyn, to bury them in new communal graves and to make a complete list. To this I received the reply that as they had been unsuccessful in getting the awaited pump and because the smell of the corpses was increasing with the heat he could not force the Russian workers to do this extremely unpleasant work of exhuming the bodies from the mud in grave Nr 5. After more discussion Lt. Sloventzik said that if we cared so much about emptying this grave we could do the work but only on our own account and by ourselves. During this conversation Lt. Sloventzik asked me what my estimate of the number of bodies in grave Nr 5 was. To my answer, that according to my estimation the number would not exceed 50 he shrugged and said that in his opinion there were certainly more than 200 bodies in this grave."

Eventually the work being done by the Russian workers of filling up grave Nr 5 was stopped and on the 1st of June 1943 the members of the Technical Committee

threw a bridge across the grave and started themselves to fetch up the bodies from the mud. This work was very difficult on account of the great degree of decomposition of the bodies which meant that the limbs or heads often came apart from the trunk as the bodies were being lifted out, by hand, from the mud. A typical feature of the bodies exhumed from this grave was the fact of the hands of all of them being tied behind their backs with a white cord tied in a double knot. Their greatcoats were tied round their heads. These greatcoats were tied with the same kind of cord at the neck level and sometimes a second knot had been made above the head of the victim. At the neck there was a simple knot and the rest of the cord was passed down the back, wound round the tied hands and then tied again at the neck. In this way the hands of the victims were pulled up to the height of the shoulder blades. Victims tied up in this way were unable to give any resistance because every move of the hands, tightened the noose round the neck thereby throttling them. They were, besides, unable to make any sound on account of the greatcoats over their heads. The Polish medico-legal expert declared that, from the "point of view of forensic medicine and criminology, such a way of tying up the victims before execution was inflicting especially refined torture before death."

"In one case", he said further on, "a small quantity of saw-dust was found between the mouth of the victim and the greatcoat. The sawdust was also found in the mouth of the victim which meant that if he had taken a sharp breath or cried out the sawdust would have entered the breathing tubes and caused him to suffocate and strangle. In a few cases/2-3/1 saw a gag made of felt stuck into the mouth of the victim with strings attached at each side which were passed round the cheeks and tied in a knot at the level of the occiput."

Between 10 and 11 a. m. on the first of June 1943 while the members of the Technical Committee were working at grave Nr 5 the news was suddenly brought of the discovery of a new grave of Polish officers. Because of this news they interrupted the work on grave Nr 5 and moved over to the newly discovered grave Nr 8.

"It was located" reports the Polish doctor "at a distance of more or less a hundred metres southwest of grave Nr 5 in a direct line with the prolongation of the long arm of grave Nr 1. It was on a small hilly mound on the other side of the marsh and behind the path through the wood which branched from the main path leading to the NKVD house by the Dnieper, which formed an arc running north-west. After arriving there I saw a sap already dug out by the Russians workers about 4 metres square in dimension at the bottom of which, at a depth of not much more than 1 m. could be seen bodies, in Polish officers uniforms. With regard to the general view of grave Nr 8 it should be stressed that on the top of it, could be seen a trough like hollow with a diameter of about 40 m² over which was growing luxuriant broad bladed grass."

On June the 1st 10 bodies were taken out of this grave and it was immediately evident that these bodies were dressed differently from those in the other graves, namely, they had no greatcoats. Closer examination of these bodies from grave Nr 8 revealed also that they had no warm underwear nor sweaters, scarves and "apelowki". The pockets of their clothes were found to contain Soviet newspapers of a later date than those newspapers found on the bodies in the other graves, namely of the early days of May 1943.

All the documents found on the bodies exhumed from grave Nr 8 were, like the documents taken out from the other graves, marked Kozielsk. They were, in the main certificates of inoculation against typhoid fever, which had, generally speaking, been found on all the bodies at Katyn. Moreover wooden cigarette holders and cases found on these bodies from grave Nr 8 bore the inscription "Kozielsk".

Close to the edge of grave Nr 8 at its south-east end wooden pickets were knocked into the bottom of the grave and woven with fascine. It was not quite clear why this fascine fence had been built into the grave and it could only be conjectured that it was meant as a boundary to the grave. In the part of the grave close to the edge there were only 4 layers of bodies lying one on top of another.

On June the 2nd test digging was done in order to establish the dimensions of the newly discovered grave. On the basis of these dimensions the medical member of the Technical Committee estimated the contents of grave Nr 8 as not exceeding 200 bodies.

"When I mentioned this figure to Lt. Sloventzik I noticed that he became nervous and angry. He told me once more that nevertheless, the total number of 12,000 was not to be questioned."

"It should be mentioned that during a former conversation with Lt. Sloventzik about the number of Katyn victims this witness had told him that, in his opinion,

12,000 bodies could definitely not be found at Katyn as, judging by the documents found on the bodies, all the victims had been brought from Kozielsk where there had not been such a large number of prisoners. Sloventzik told him that as, after all, the entire Katyn forest was one big cemetery undoubtedly other groups of graves of Polish POW's from other camps would be found, especially of those from Starobielsk. Therefore, when the new grave Nr 8 was found, located separately from the others, the Germans supposed that they had indeed found the group of graves of POW's from Starobielsk. But the documents found on the bodies as well as the other objects /cigarette holders/ proved that the victims in this grave also came from Kozliesk. This fact, as well as the small dimensions of the grave, shattered the hopes of the Germans and hence their original delight caused by the discovery of a new grave, quickly changed into "obvious discontent."

Because of this and because of the failure of the German search for new graves at Katyn the decision was taken to interrupt the work of exhumation. The initiative in this matter was taken by the Polish doctor who suggested it to Sloventzik. As he was completely cut off from the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw he did not know that the Germans had, for some time, been considering the possibility of "interrupting" the work as this was the only way out of the difficulty created by them having published and continually repeated the figure of 12,000 Katyn victims in their propaganda. The Polish doctor's reasons for wishing to interrupt the work were, that the Technical Committee could no longer carry on with the very heavy and unpleasant work without assistance and the fear of the approaching Soviet offensive, as well as of the prospect of "paying with their heads" if they refused to give the false number in the final report to be made at the end of the exhumations.

This Polish proposal for interrupting the work at Katyn suited the Germans extremely well as it provided them with the guarantee that no objections would be raised on the Polish side when an official communique would announce that the work in Katyn would not be finished, but, after the exhumation of over 4,000 victims, only temporarily "interrupted". Lt. Sloventzik, however, was not satisfied and wished to provide the Germans with additional proofs that not all the bodies had been exhumed at Katyn and declared that the newly discovered grave Nr 8 would not be uncovered further but would be left until the Autumn, before its contents were disclosed.

The Polish doctor accepted Lt. Sloventzik's decision although his instructions from Warsaw from the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross, were explicitly to the effect that all important decisions must be left to them. But it should be stressed that for some weeks, there had been no sign of life from Warsaw and that he had no possibility of getting in touch with the Polish Red Cross' authorities. Moreover his agreement was given only after some consideration, a fact which he emphasized in his depositions made in London in 1947.

"Despite the failure over grave Nr 8 Lt. Sloventzik told me again that in his opinion there must be further Polish officers' graves in the Katyn forest and that the search for these graves would continue. To this, referring to my previous conversations, I declared categorically, that the present team which had worked then, for more than one month in very difficult and unpleasant conditions, was most decidedly overworked and refused to stay and work longer at Katyn. I drew his attention also to the increasing heat and the fact of its causing the stench of the bodies to grow more and more horrible as well as to the danger of epidemics. I impressed upon him that it was still our wish to exhume all the bodies of Polish officers at Katyn and to rebury them properly, so that in the case of further graves being discovered the work interrupted then, could be resumed in the Autumn and brought to a finish. To this Lt. Sloventzik replied that if that was the case, the further exhumations from grave Nr 8 would be made in the Autumn and for the time being the uncovered part of the grave should be filled in again with earth and the rest remain undisturbed."

"Wishing, together with the whole of the Technical Committee, to leave Katyn as soon as possible in view of the approaching personal danger from the Soviet side/offensive/and from the German side/the tension over the number of Katyn bodies/I agreed to accept Lt. Sloventzik's decision being additionally influenced by the following facts."

"1. As I have already said before, contrary to what I had originally supposed namely, that more Polish doctors would come to Katyn, I had been, during the whole period of exhumation work, the only Polish doctor there and in view of the attitude of the German authorities I had lost all hope of the possibility of more Polish doctors coming to work there. But nevertheless, I hoped that if the work of exhumation could be resumed in the Autumn it would be possible for a

larger number of Polish doctors to come, whose collective opinion as to the conditions, circumstances and date of the murder would carry more weight with the Polish nation. Not believing in the possibility of the Germans finding further graves of Polish officers in Katyn forest I wished the possibly more numerous delegation of Polish experts, to be in a position to find untouched material in grave 8 to work upon."

"2. Besides, in view of the developments in the war then taking place both on the Eastern Front as well as in the West /the throwing out of the Germans from North Africa/ I took into account the not excluded possibility of the area of the Katyn forest being free from German occupation by the Autumn. Then, I supposed, it might be possible to execute the plan of sending to Katyn an international or an interallied medico-legal commission. I wish to emphasize that when I started out for Katyn I was convinced that the commission of the International Red Cross which had been proposed, would come there and when it did not arrive at Katyn I was deeply disappointed. Thus, the leaving of the greater part of grave Nr 8 untouched would amount to preserving for such an international commission very valuable evidence, untouched by the Germans."

After this conversation and the agreement as to the details of the "interruption" of the exhumation work Lt. Sloventzik undoubtedly sent a report on this plan to the central authorities. These were doubtless well satisfied since the initiative coming from the Polish doctor supplied them with a suitable pretext for not denying their propaganda.

As a result the decision to "interrupt" the work at Katyn was taken with great rapidity. Already the next day after the conversation quoted above, the Executive Committee of the Polish Red Cross was informed about it by the representative of the Ministry of propaganda at the Central Office of the General Government in Warsaw.

"Only on the 3rd of June 1943 did Dr. Grundmann inform us by letter that, on the 5th of June, exhumation work would temporarily cease and that the members of the Committee would be returning to Warsaw between the 4th and 9th June and at the same time he repeated that the sending of new chief was already unnecessary." /From confidential report of the Polish Red Cross/.

On the same day, 3rd of June 1943, four members of the Technical Committee together with the above mentioned doctor were granted permission by the Germans to leave Katyn. The remaining members of the Technical Committee stayed there a few days longer in order to complete the work of fishing out the bodies from the flooded grave Nr 5 and to rebury all the exhumed Katyn victims in the new cemetery of communal graves.

In the last communal grave, Nr. VI, which was began on the 3rd of June 1943, the rest of the exhumed bodies from grave Nr 1 and 2 were reburied together with 10 bodies taken out from grave Nr 8 /list numbers 4075-4048/ and 46 bodies fished out from grave Nr 5 on the 5th of June 1943 /list numbers 4085-4130/. After grave VI had been completed on 7th of June 1943 the remaining members of the Technical Committee left Katyn.

III. THE NUMBER OF BODIES IN KATYN GRAVES IN THE LIGHT OF THE POLISH REPORTS

The description of the work of exhumation at Katyn given above on the basis of new Polish materials does not present any exceptional revelation as compared with the German material analysed in Facts and Documents /ch.XX/. Both descriptions are in general accordance with one another as can be seen from the reports of the Polish doctor frequently quoted above. Speaking about the report of Prof. Buhtz which was the main basis of the relevant chapter in Facts and Documents he said:

"I must emphasize that I read this report after the publication of the German book on Katyn and I compared it with my notes but I did not notice any discrepancy then."

In these circumstances we can accept the fact that Prof. Buhtz's report spoke the truth and did not contain any falsehoods but nevertheless we cannot assert that the whole truth was given in it. Some doubts as to this arise when we compare this report with the Foreword of Amtliches Material.

This Foreword is not signed from which it follows that it is written by the editor namely Auswartiges Amt and it has a decidedly propagandist character. In it we find the number of Katyn victims as being probably 10.000-12.000. Now, nowhere in Prof. Buhtz's report is this number to be found.

This difference may be expressed in the following way: Prof. Buhtz states that 4.143 bodies were taken out from the Katyn graves. The Foreword *conjectures*

that there were in the Katyn area 10,000–12,000 bodies and states that up to that time /July 1943/ 4,143 bodies had in fact been exhumed.

This point is of basic importance because it is essentially connected with the history of the three camps given in Facts and Documents. After careful analysis we arrived there at the well founded conclusion based on the depositions of witnesses that the inmates of the three camps were liquidated in an identical manner but in different places. Only the inhabitants of Kozielsk were liquidated at Katyn which held at that time about 4,500 prisoners. The determining of the number of bodies at Katyn as being four thousand and some hundreds is a strong argument in support of this interpretation.

The determination of this number has yet further significance. Namely, if it is proved that the Katyn graves held four thousand and some hundreds of bodies and not 10,000–12,000 the question of the “missing” prisoners from Starobielsk and Ostashkov remains open, *independently of who is responsible for the mass murders at Katyn*. This explains why the Soviet press and radio accepted so readily the figures of 10,000–12,000 given out by the German propaganda and also explains the fact of a correction having been made in the Nuremberg indictment. As is known the relevant item in the Nuremberg indictment presented by the Soviet Prosecutor originally gave the figure of bodies at Katyn as 925 /the number of bodies exhumed by the Soviet Special Commission during the second exhumation of January 1944—see Facts and Documents p. 376/. Only later did the Soviet Prosecutor introduce a correction giving the number of bodies as 11,000; this correction was attached to every copy in the form of a special errata slip.

Thus we must pay special attention to this question and consequently we must examine all the German statements concerning the conclusion and or interruption of the emptying of the graves in June 1943.

We must first establish the date on which the work terminated. The report of Prof. Buhtz gives this date as June 3rd 1943 /Amtliches Material p. 40/ and the final report /Schlussbericht/ of 2/Lt. Voss gives the date as June 7th /Amtliches Material p. 33/. This divergence can be very easily explained. The date given by Prof. Buhtz is the date when the work of emptying grave Nr 8, the last to be discovered, was interrupted which means that it is the date of the interruption of the work done on removing new and as yet uncovered bodies. Independently of this work of reburying the bodies already exhumed in new graves continued as also the work of fishing out the bodies from grave Nr 5 which was flooded with water. All this work was finished on the 7th of June and hence this date is found in 2/Lt. Voss's report. So these two dates though divergent can easily be made to accord.

On the other hand the date given in the Foreword to the Amtliches Material /p. 10/ cannot be made to fit in with the dates given above. It is given generally as being “July” and the corresponding phrase runs: “. . . bis im Juli die Sommerhitze eine Unterbrechung des Ausgrabungsarbeiten notwendig machte.” Now we have already emphasized that the Foreword, being the work of the editor of the book, has a definitely propagandist character. Thus in analysing the above quoted phrase we cannot help but be persuaded that the date “Juli” was put in in order to make the reason given for the interruption of the work namely “Sommerhitze” appear more plausible and the whole presentation of the case more convincing. This conviction is supported by two facts namely:

- 1/ No reasons are given for this date,
- 2/ Its divergence from both dates given in the reports of Prof. Buhtz and 2/Lt. Voss.

We can therefore accept without hesitation the date of the suspension of the work at Katyn as being 7th of June 1943.

Further we must ask ourselves in what sense we can speak about the exhumation-work in Katyn being either interrupted or concluded. For the complete elucidation of this problem we must consider separately the following questions:

- 1/ the question of the first seven Polish graves,
- 2/ the question of grave Nr 8,
- 3/ the question of possible further graves.

Ad 1/. Dealing with this point in Facts and Documents /p. 322–327/ we showed that the expression “interruption of work” could not be used about the first seven graves because all of them were, by the first days of June 1943 completely *emptied*. We based this assertion not only on an article published in the Gonic Krakowski /Cracow Messenger/ which spoke of the emptying and refilling of the two largest graves, and on German photographs which showed the bottoms of the graves practically emptied, but principally on reasoning. Basing our calculation on the

dimensions of the graves given by the Germans we worked out the maximum capacity of the graves by two methods. /Facts and Documents p. 322-327/. Since this time these calculations and therefore the thesis concerning the complete emptying of the seven graves has been confirmed by further evidence.

The official report of the Technical Committee on its work in Katyn states explicitly:

"During the work of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross in Katyn forest which began on 15th of April 1943 in all 4,243 bodies were exhumed of which 4,233 were removed from the 7 seven graves which were situated close to one another and uncovered in March 1943 by German military authorities. From these 7 graves all the bodies were removed. The very careful sounding over the whole territory made by the Germans who were anxious that the figures 10-12 thousands bodies given out by their propaganda should not prove to be remote from the truth allows us to presume that no more graves will be discovered. The number of bodies in the eighth grave judging by its calculated dimensions should not be more than a few hundred."

Thus, as far as 7 graves are concerned, we can conclude with complete certainty that the phrase the "interruption of work" is not applicable because the work on the 7 graves was finished by the 7th of June when all the bodies had been taken out and reburied in new graves.

Ad 2/. The problem of the eighth grave is different. This was refilled on the 3rd June after 10 bodies had been taken out. Test digging and sounding was done in order to establish its measurements and capacity which were calculated by the Polish doctor there as being of a maximum of 200 bodies. This calculation provoked strong opposition from Lt. Sloventzik /see the foregoing chapter p. 49/. Thus the assertion that the work was *interrupted* is, with regard to this grave correct. But the Polish doctor's calculation of the total capacity of the grave being 200 bodies should be borne in mind. Since this fact was omitted by the German authorities from their communique or the interruption of work at Katyn or rather we should say, since it was done deliberately that it was concealed.

Ad 3/. The expression "interruption" of work at Katyn could be used in connection not only with the eight graves but also perhaps with further possible graves for which the Germans were searching. In this case it would indicate the interruption of the search for new graves. But here the reason given for the interruption namely, the heat of the Summer and the plague of flies, is without sense. Even if the Summer heat and the plague of flies made the work of exhumation impossible it could not have interfered with the search for more graves which only involved sounding the ground with metal sticks and making test diggings. As we read in the report quoted above the Germans took very careful soundings over the whole forest area but without results. Moreover from the point of view of our theory, that only the inmates of Kozielsk were liquidated at Katyn, this search was doomed to failure beforehand, as the number of bodies in fact removed from the graves together with the probable number of bodies in grave Nr. 8 exactly equalled the number of men taken from Kozielsk. However, the local German authorities obstinately stuck to the number given in the German propaganda although the reasoning of the Polish medical expert /see above p. 49/ should have put them on the right track. The searches were interrupted only when all hope of finding further graves was lost and when at the same time the interruption of work on grave Nr. 8 which could be accounted for by the heat would provide a suitable pretext. Thus we can state that the work of searching for further graves was not interrupted but *given up* and that, not because of "the Summer heat and the plague of flies" but because it gave no further results.

In sum our reasoning is:

1/ With regard to 7 graves, the work on them was not interrupted but finished because all the bodies had been removed and reburied in new graves.

2/ With regard to the search for new graves, this work was not interrupted but given up because it gave no results.

3/ With regard to grave Nr 8 the work was in fact interrupted, but deliberately, because its dimensions obviously dashed the hopes of the German propagandists.

The Germans were thus able by issuing a deliberately inaccurate communique to bolster up their propaganda.

We ourselves, in view of the foregoing considerations, have no doubt that the number of bodies at Katyn was four thousand and some hundreds since it was exactly the number of men taken from Kozielsk. Therefore the discoveries at Katyn offer no solution to the problem of Starobielsk and Ostashkov.

Having now solved the problem of the number of bodies at Katyn in a general way /four thousand and some hundreds and not 10,000-12,000/ we must try to

determine as far as possible the exact number of bodies there with the aid of our new material. This material consists of both a detailed description of the new cemetery and the protocols signed by the member of the Technical Committee giving the exact number and the order of bodies placed in every new grave. By means of these documents we can fix precisely the number of bodies exhumed at Katyn. They show that the number 4.143 given in Amtliches Material and consequently quoted in Facts and Documents was not exact. It did not include the bodies exhumed by the Germans during the first period of exhumation before the arrival at Katyn of the representatives of the Polish Red Cross and not placed on the official list of Katyn victims.

The report of the Technical Committee says that from the number 17 4.243 bodies which were exhumed and subsequently reburied in the new communal graves, 4.233 were taken from graves 1-7.

The protocols mentioned above on the contents of the new communal graves give their numbers as follows:

Grave Nr I	310
Individual graves of generals	2
Grave Nr II	980
Grave Nr III	700
Grave Nr IV	1220
Grave Nr V	700
Grave Nr VI	331
Total	4243

The difference between this number and the number given in Amtliches Material and consequently in our Facts and Documents, namely 4143, is very small /2,35% of the total number of bodies/ and cannot affect the thesis that only the prisoners from Kozielsk are laying in the Katyn graves. However this divergence does call for an explanation.

The difference is exactly a hundred and its general explanation is quite simple. The list of the order of burial attached to the report of the Technical Committee of the Polish Red Cross states that in the new Nr I grave 310 bodies were reburied of which "112 had no list numbers." These were the first bodies lifted out by the Germans before the arrival of the Technical Committee when the work on the Katyn graves had not yet been systematically organised. As a result the official German numbering was began later and omitted the first 112 bodies. In this case however the official German total should be 112 a not 100 less than the total of the Technical Committee, that is, it should come to 4.131 and not 4.143. Now this number is in fact to be found in Amtliches Material, as the list of bodies printed there at the end contains 4.131 places. The last but one place on it has the number 4.130 and the following and last, the number 4.143. So the total given in Amtliches Material calculated, as it should be, by the number of places equals 4.131 which gives a difference of 112 between the German total and the total of the Technical Committee's report, which is correct. The divergence is thus satisfactorily explained.

The question however, arises as to why the last number was made 4.143 instead of 4.131. Is it just a mistake or has it some significance? On this point we can only make our suppositions but there is a strong probability that these are correct.

We have already mentioned that on June the first ten bodies were taken out of grave Nr 8 which were subsequently reburied in the New Nr VI grave. These were obviously not the only bodies to be taken from grave Nr 8 because we find in Prof. Buhtz's report the following phrase: "Die zuletzt aus dem Grab 8 zur Untersuchung entnommenen 13 Leichen polnischer Militärpersonen wurden nach Überprüfung, Sektion und Sicherstellung des notwendigen Beweismaterials vorläufig wieder im ursprünglichen Grab beigesetzt." /Amtliches Material p. 42/.

It is not known when this "final" exhumation was made but we presume that it occurred after the departure of the Technical Committee who do not mentioned it. The Polish medical expert of the Technical Committee said in his deposition made in London: "During my stay in Katyn I did not see Prof. Buhtz examining bodies from Nr 8, it was done however by other German doctors in particular by Dr. Müller. I do not know if Prof. Buhtz came to Katyn forest after my departure from there or whether and what bodies he examined." If, however, we accept Prof. Buhtz's assertion as true then our last difficulty is hypothetically removed. We may assume that having stated the existence of a further 13 bodies in grave Nr. 8, the German clerks wished to increase the total of bodies by this number by altering the number of the last place which was 4.131. Having how-

ever erased this figure they made a mistake at the last moment and added the figure "13" not to the last erased figure but to the last figure still remaining which was 4.130, thus obtaining the figure 4.143. This hypothetical solution of the problem has now however no essential significance.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE KATYN EXECUTIONS OBTAINED FROM A LOCAL INHABITANT

The Russian witness quoted in previous chapters and now living in the West spoke not only of the circumstances of the discovery of the Katyn graves but also about the bringing of the Polish officers to Gnezdovo and subsequently to Katyn Forest. Here are excerpts from his depositions.

"At the beginning of March 1940 there were rumours that the NKVD would construct some buildings in the woods at Kose Gory, as pits for the foundations were being dug out. These pits were dug out by civilian prisoners who were being brought in 3 or 4 lorries under NKVD guard from the prison in Smolensk. I myself saw how these prisoners were being brought. The work was begun at the beginning of March. I supposed that the prisoners came from Smolensk as the lorries came from that direction. When the work was finished convoys of officers began to arrive Gnezdovo station. I remember that these convoys started to arrive when the peace with Finland was concluded and so people began to say that the NKVD was bringing Finnish officers. But already on the second day some of the local inhabitants recognised Polish uniforms so that was known that they were convoys of Polish officer POW's."

"These convoys were brought by special trains made up of an engine and 3-4 "Stolypinka".^{*} Sometimes these were smaller two-axle trucks and sometimes bigger ones with four axles. The whole train was put into a siding near the store house where there was a small square. There a "Tshorni Voron"^{**} was placed with its back to the truck and the officers were loaded into it. There were two "Tshorni Voron" as well as a lorry on which the baggage of the Polish officers was being loaded and a car. By the car went the commanding officer, an NKVD officer. I did not see the badges very distinctly but I think he had one "diamond"^{***}. After the officers were loaded into the "Tshorni Voron" the whole convoy of four cars went off in the direction of Kose Gory and then kept coming back for the other remaining groups.

The inhabitants of the nearby villages said that these officers were being brought by the NKVD to Kose Gory to be shot there. It is true that nobody saw the executions but it was known that there was no camp in Kose Gory forest and besides that, this place had been known as a place of execution for several years.

The guard was composed of NKVD men from Smolensk and I personally knew one of the drivers of the "Tshorni Voron". His name was Yakiv Rozuvayev nicknamed Kim. Besides it was known that the driver Pietka whose name I do not remember and who drove the lorry on which the luggage of the officers was taken to the forest of Kose Gory and who was fired by the NKVD and worked in Soiz Trans in Smolensk, used to say, even before the Germans came, that the NKVD had shot these officers.

One of my relatives told me that, when the railway carriages with the officers in were being brought to the siding, he saw an acquaintance of his, an NKVD man, acting as a guard. He began a conversation with him and asked if they were bringing these men to a camp and the man replied: "Well where have you here any camps? Why do you talk such nonsense? Don't you know where such people are being taken to?"

"After the war of 1939 there were no camps of Polish POW's either at Gnezdovo and the Katyn region or further to the West. Also no road work was done in this area other than the normal repairing by the local road repairers."

* Stolypinka—Russian prison truck.

** Tshorni Voron—"Black Crow" Russian prison car /Black Maria/.

*** Diamond—Before the reintroduction in the Red Army of the old badges of rank similar to the Tsarist ones, one, two, three or four diamonds were used by the officers of general's rank.

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